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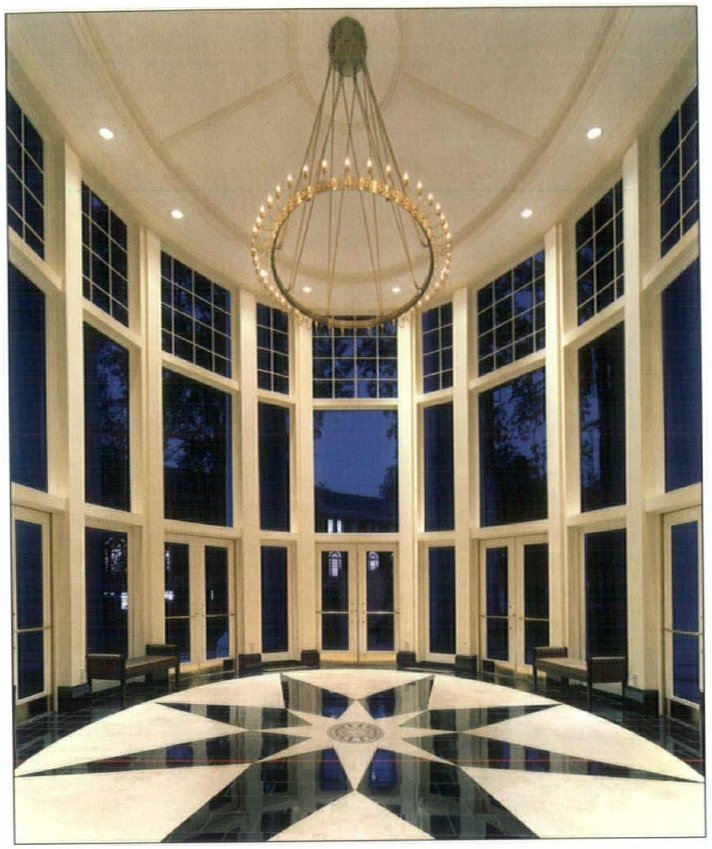

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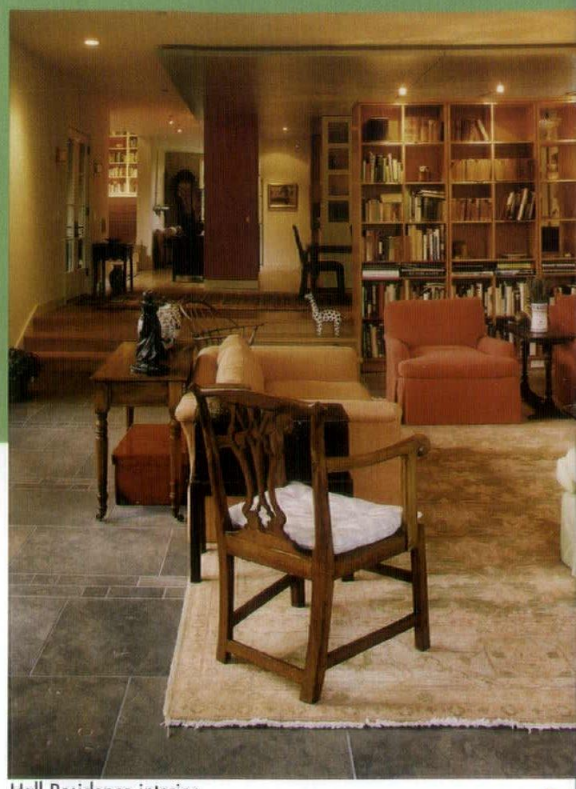

Hall Residence interior.

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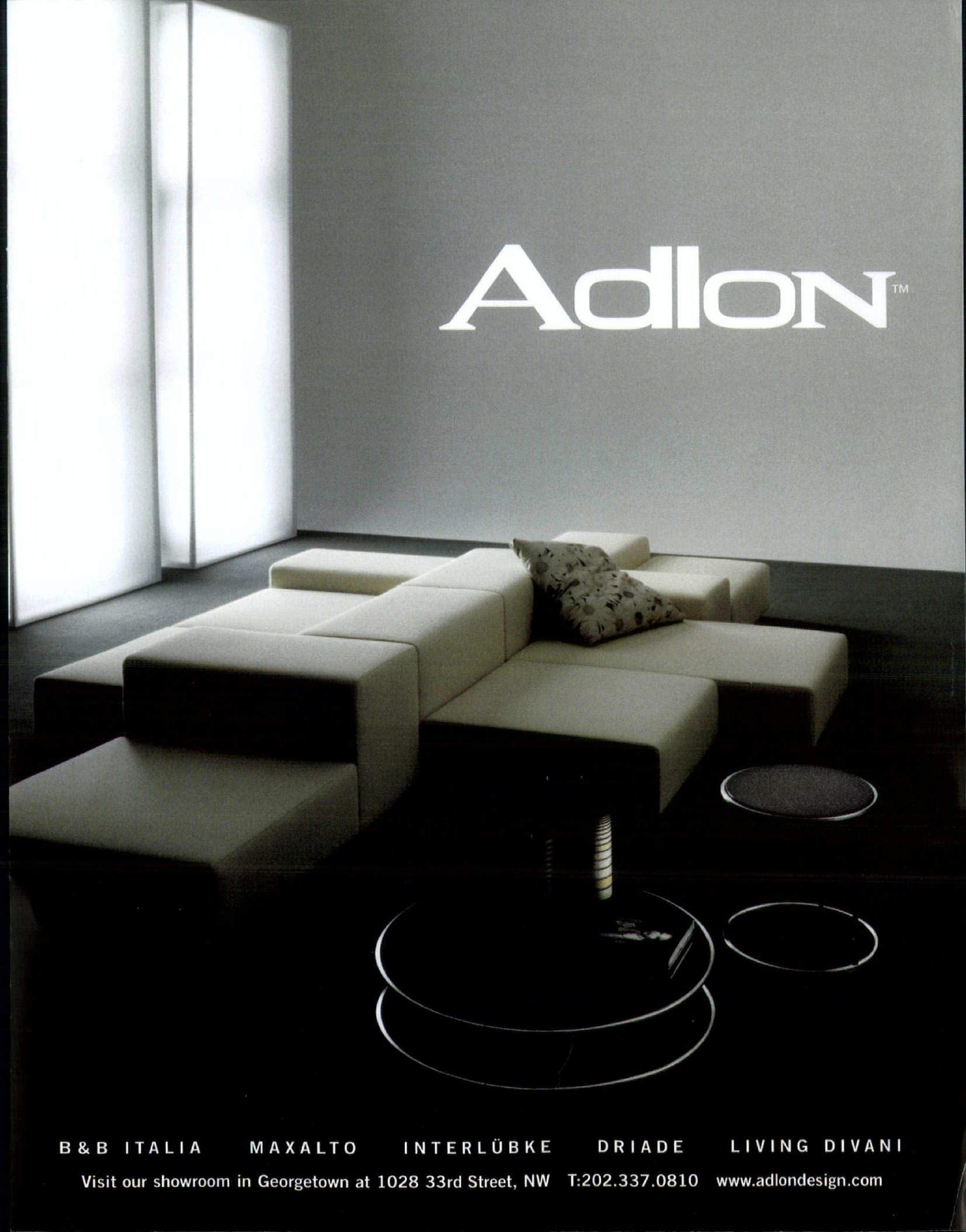
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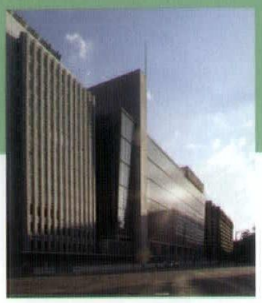

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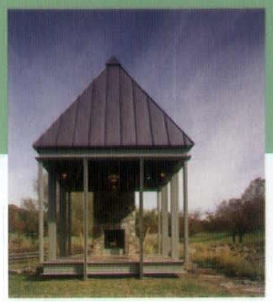

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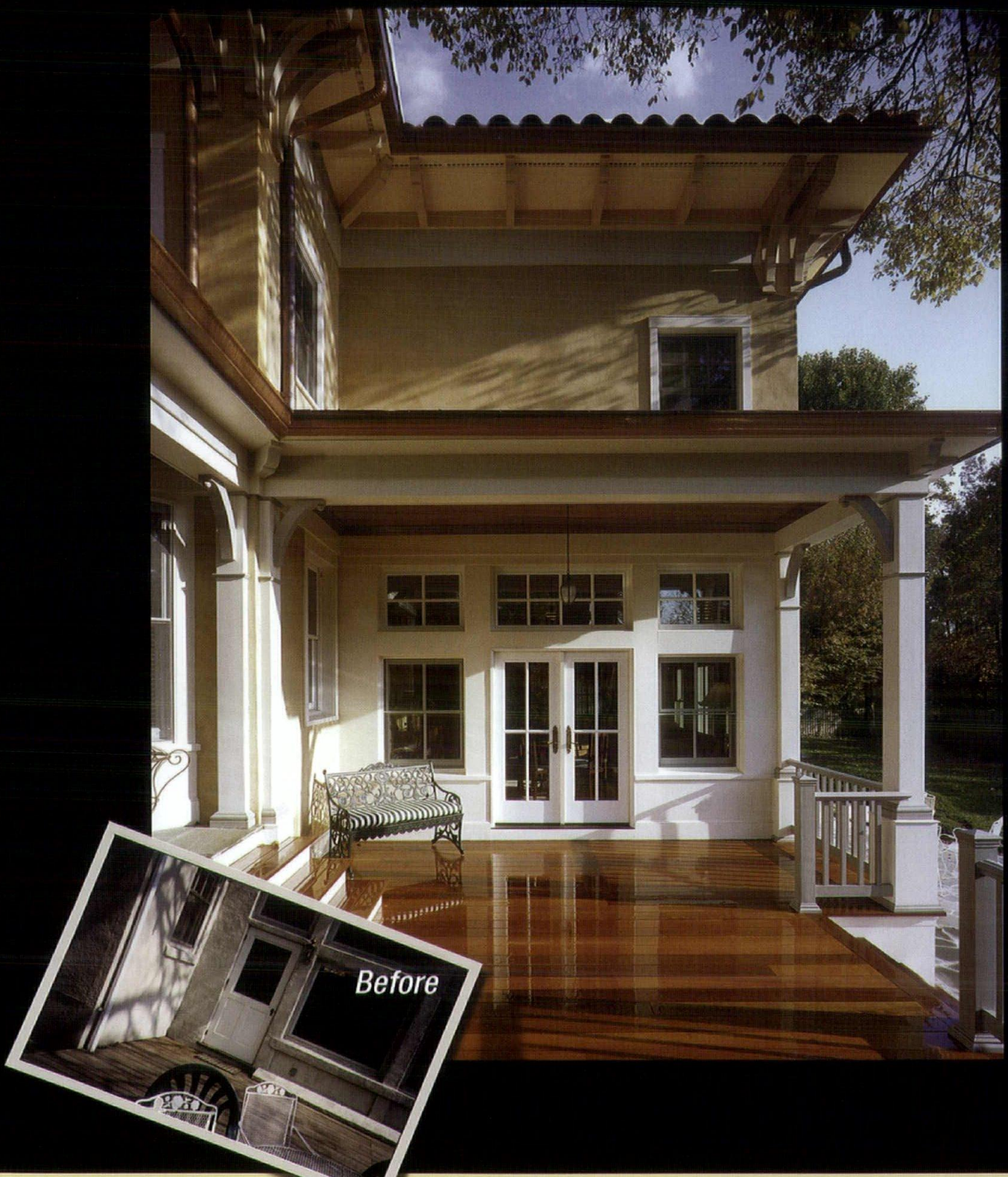
Before

Architecture Week — September 9 -16, 2006 – Learning is serious fun

David Hamilton

This year marks our eighth edition of Architecture Week—our annual public celebration of local architecture. Planning it gets more fun each year—we really enjoy giving you new ways to see architecture and the city around you.

This year's Architecture Week, like those in past years, features a number of events, including our wonderful house tour benefiting the Washington Architectural Foundation (see page 36 for a complete calendar of events). This year, however, we have a special treat to offer you – the *Art of Architecture Auction.* **Ellyn Lester, CPSM, Assoc. AIA,** Vice President of the Architecture Division of MBA Management, one of our generous corporate affiliates, gave us a brilliant suggestion for a new type of fundraiser for the Foundation – an auction of famous architects' sketches. We wrote letters to some of the world's most renowned architects and then sat back and waited. Soon our mailbox was brimming with original works of art from famous architects in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Each work is signed by the architect and carefully matted. Any of these beauties can be yours by attending the auction on September 15. For a preview of some of the sketches, turn to Ellyn's article on page 26. You can see even more of them at **www.aiadc.com/sketches.**

Welcome

For about two years now, a small cadre has been working tirelessly on the new edition of the *AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington DC.* Chief among them is this new edition's author, **G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA,** senior vice president and curator at the National Building Museum. Martin's article, starting on page 32, describes the process of revising the previous edition, which was published in 1994, and how this new edition includes so much new material that it was really "40 years in the making." The new guide will be published by the Johns Hopkins Press at the end of October 2006—just in time for the holidays! Martin will speak about the book at a free lecture on September 14.

Frequent contributor and cover designer **Ronald O'Rourke** writes about new embassy buildings soon to be finished in Washington. As a result of his article, the Swiss Embassy has graciously arranged a special tour of its new ambassador's residence, designed by **Steven Holl Architects,** just for readers of *ARCHITECTURE**DC*** magazine, on September 16.

It's been a great joy to put this issue of *ARCHITECTURE**DC*** together with guest editor **Denise Liebowitz.** Denise and I worked together at the National Capital Planning Commission before I came to AIA | DC. Her professionalism and talent are reflected in these pages. Denise gives some good tips on designing with light (page 40), and reveals the history of Rosedale, the site of our 4th annual house tour, which will take place on September 9 (page 12).

Finally, this issue could not have been completed without photographer **Boris Feldblyum.** Not only did he shoot most of the photos illustrating the articles, he carefully documented each of the architect's sketches. Boris is also the photographer for most of the new buildings in the forthcoming AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington DC. We are extremely grateful to Boris for his generosity toward to the chapter and the magazine.

Enjoy Architecture Week!

Mary Fitch, AICP
Publisher

ERRATA

There were two errors in the Architect/Client Resource Center Directory published in the Summer 2006 issue. The address for **Muse Architects** is **7401 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 500, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, (301) 718-88188.** We incorrectly printed the address as Connecticut Avenue. We regret any confusion this may have caused. We also incorrectly referred to **Bonstra Haresign Architects, LLP,** as Bonstra Haresign Architects, PC. We regret the errors.

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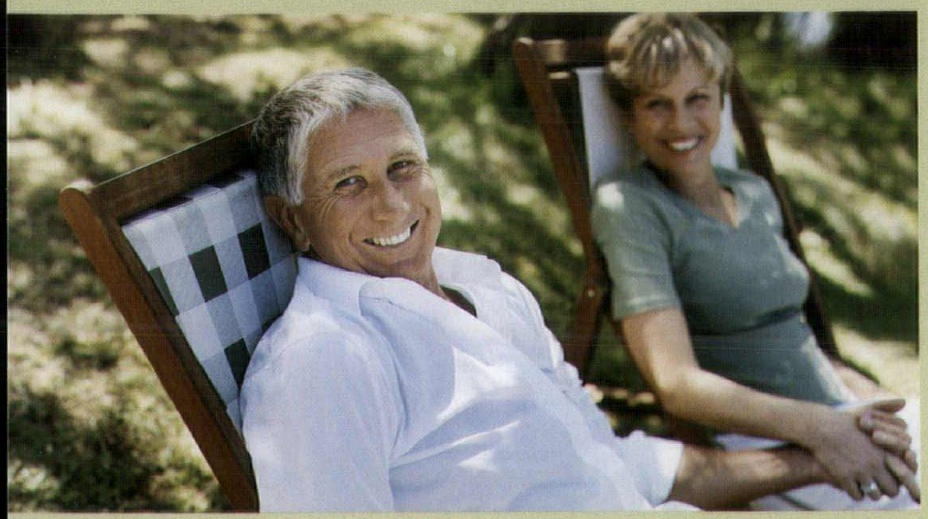

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DetailsDC

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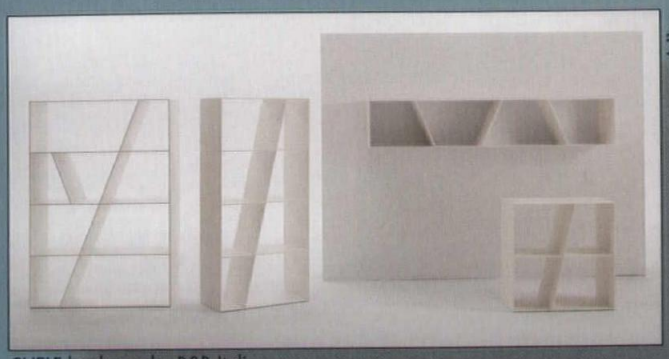
by Denise Liebowitz



Adlon

SHELF bookcase by B&B Italia

Shelved and Tabled. Adlon in Georgetown's historic Cady's Alley showcases modern furniture with European glamour. Its collection includes such top-of-the-line manufacturers as B&B Italia, Maxalto, Interlubke, Kasthall, Living Divani, and Driade. Customers can experience this sophisticated merchandise in an elegant setting of rough stone walls and glossy black floors. Typical of the showroom's offerings is the dramatic **SHELF bookcase** from **B&B Italia** designed by Naoto Fukasawa. The bold diagonal support allows the piece to be placed against a wall or in the center of the room as a partition. Made in a white solid surface material that appears to have been carved from a single block, this bookcase has plenty of graphic impact, and the precise, slim-line construction adds to its wow factor. The SHELF series starts at $2,195.

Adlon also carries B&B Italia's new series called **THE TABLE,** a collection of **tables, desks, and consoles** in many sizes and finishes and all with the classic Italian hallmarks of simplicity and rigor. By mixing and matching steel frames (in white, matte black, or glossy chrome) with tops (clear glass, oak, black, marble, or white laminated wood) there is no end to the sleek and elegant looks available to the discriminating shopper. For use in the home or office, the pieces can come with accessories such as drawers and wire storage elements. The dining table starts at $3,678. Visit Adlon at 1028 33rd Street, NW; 202-337-0810 or **www.adlondesign.com.**

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Milan does the Kennedy years. Straight from the Italian showroom floors Poltrona Frau has taken a fresh look at American style in the 50s and 60s as defined by the golden and carefree myth of the Kennedy era. The **Kennedee Sofa** designed by Jean Marie Massaud was presented for the first time this April at the Milan shows. This reinterpretation bears the unmistakable hallmark of Poltrona Frau. The handcrafted workmanship, the meticulous hand stitching, and the extraordinary quality of Pelle Frau leather, make this sofa a must-have for serious Camelot seekers. (There's a Jackie bed too.) Prices for the Kennedee Sofa series start at $8,400. The Poltrona Frau showroom is in Georgetown at 1010 Wisconsin Avenue; **www.frauwashington.com.**

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The Kennedee Sofa at Poltrona Frau

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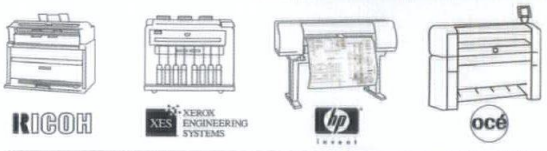

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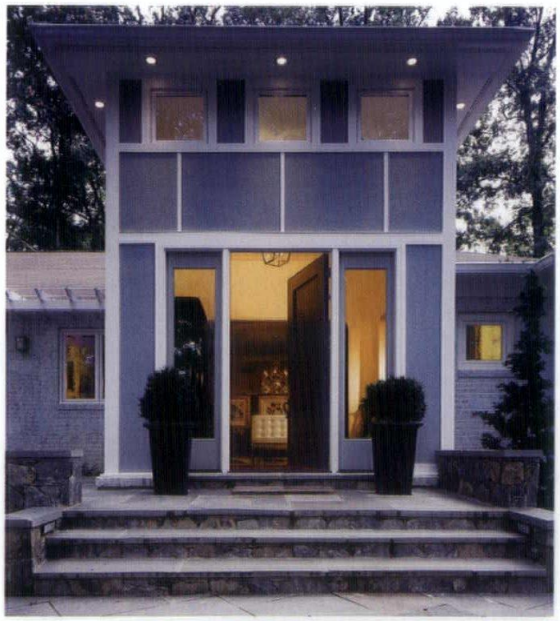

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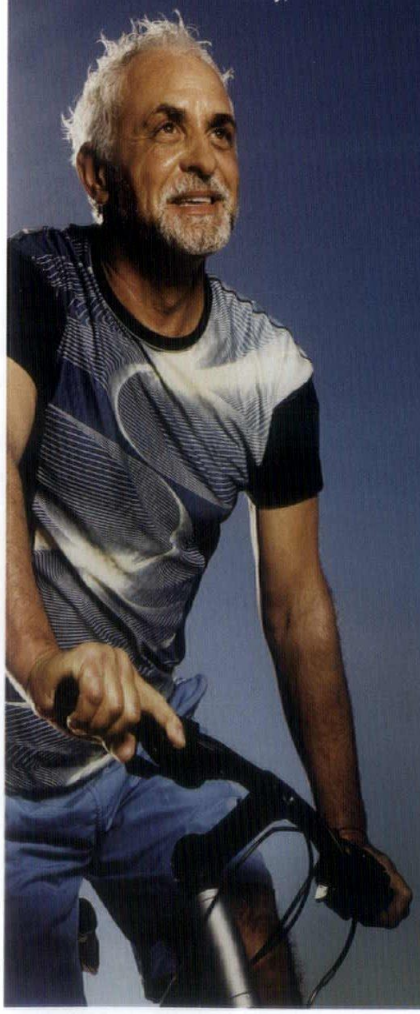

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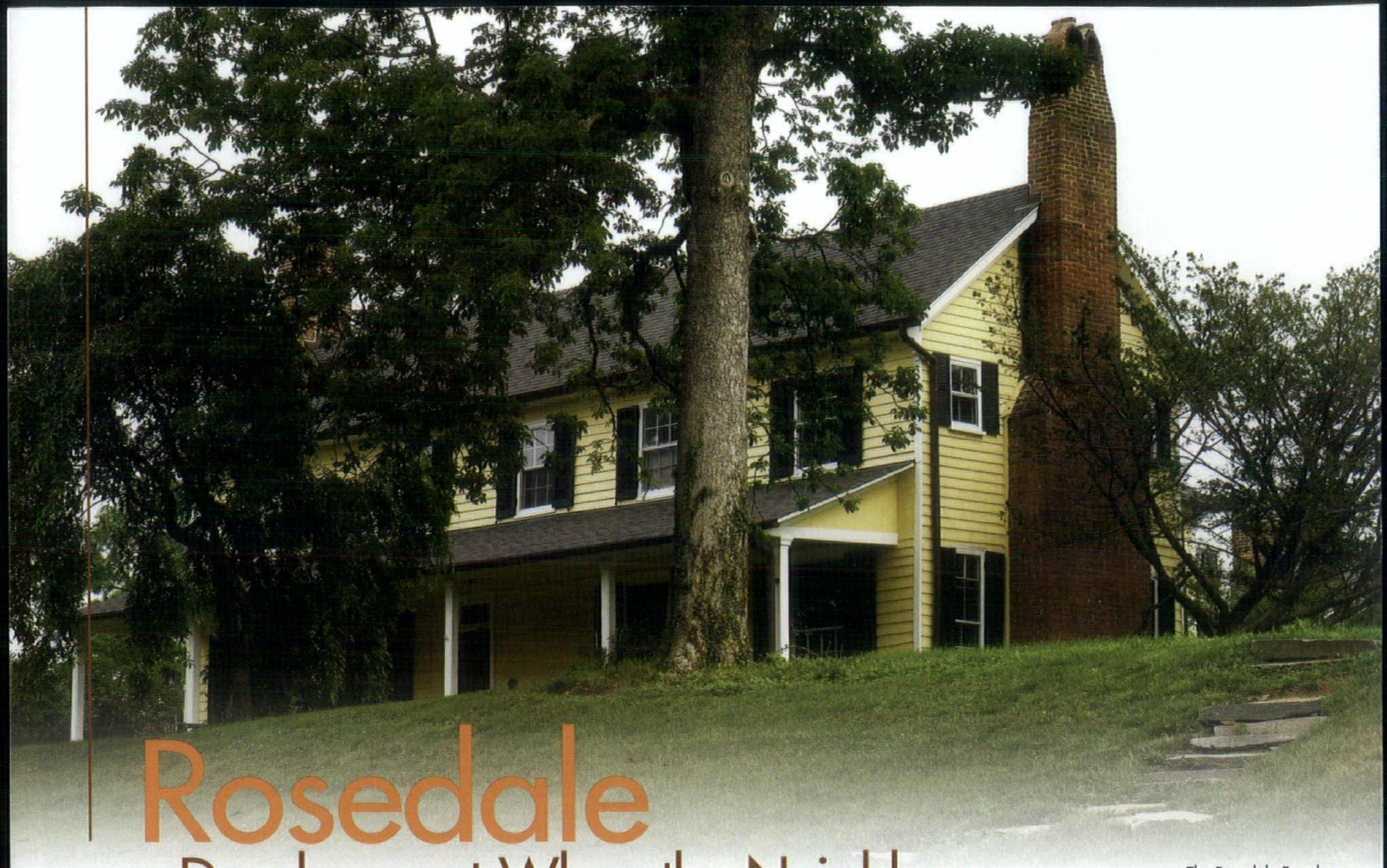


Rosedale

Development When the Neighbors Take Charge

The Rosedale Farmhouse and south lawns.

by Denise Liebowitz

"Hostile takeover" and "We will oppose it any way we can." Those were the fighting words of one Cleveland Park resident four years ago in yet another classic tale of a Washington neighborhood fighting off development it didn't want. But in this case the often-told story had a happy ending thanks to an energized community group, strong historic preservation protections, and the deep pockets of savvy residents in this tony Northwest enclave.

The property in dispute was Rosedale, a farmhouse reputed to be the oldest structure in the District of Columbia. Built around 1740, Rosedale began as a humble two-room stone cottage set on 240 acres in what was then colonial Maryland countryside north of Georgetown. Revolutionary War hero General Uriah Forrest bought the property in 1793, and the next year built a separate large frame house just south of the original stone cottage. Several decades later, the two buildings were joined with an 11-foot connecting structure, and that is how the house has remained for the nearly 200 years since.

Although much of the land was sold off over the years, Rosedale was home to the Forrest family and its descendants until 1917. Subsequent owners updated the house, installing central heating and electricity and building a guest cottage on the property that still stands today.

Covenant with the Neighborhood

It was in the 1960s when things started to heat up at Rosedale. By then, the National Cathedral owned the property and had constructed three modern three-story brick dormitories around the original farmhouse. For the next 20 years, National Cathedral School students lived in the dormitories and NCS teachers and administrators occupied the old house. When NCS stopped accepting boarding students in the late 1970s, the Cathedral sought to sell the property and Cleveland Park residents were quick to offer up their opinions of who would make an acceptable neighbor. With wide community support, Youth for Understanding (YFU), an international student exchange organization, purchased Rosedale. As part of that sale, YFU agreed to a covenant with its Cleveland Park neighbors guaranteeing stewardship of the property. Continuing a treasured tradition, the covenant ensured public access to the farmhouse's shaded and historic front lawns. In addition, in what would become a critical provision for today's Cleveland Park residents, 18 of the property's adjacent neighbors were given the right of last refusal in the event Rosedale was ever sold.

Youth for Understanding set up its offices in the old dormitories, gained famed as the temporary refuge to the shipwrecked Cuban boy, Elian Gonzalez, and for more than

20 years, was by all accounts a great Cleveland Park neighbor. By 2000, however, the organization was in financial trouble and sought to sell off its valuable property—the farmhouse, the guest house, the three dormitories/office buildings, and 6.5 acres of land. The development tug-of-war was on.

Offers came in quickly for this coveted piece of real estate. The Special Olympics wanted a new headquarters, and neighbors hoped to work out an arrangement that would provide for stewardship of the house, access to the lawns, and protections against redevelopment. That ultimately failed, and YFU resumed its hunt for a buyer. Two came in. One with widespread community support was from two neighbors and a family trust, who proposed to demolish the modern dormitory buildings, build only one new house, and place the lawns in a conservation easement forever. The other was from the Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital, for a new campus. When YFU announced that the school's was the winning bid, Cleveland Park organizers went into overdrive. They firmly rejected the prospect of the diminished access, increased traffic and congestion that a school would bring, and sought to exercise their right of last refusal.

Jonathan Abram, one of the key organizers of the community effort, recalls this period in the summer and fall of 2002 as a time of "16-hour days and mind-numbing complexity," when he and other community movers and shakers put together the financial, tax, and real estate package on behalf of their neighbors. The residents had only 90 days to match the school's $12 million offer, and, in the words of Abram, "there were lots of individual cats to be herded."

Boris Feldblyum

Homeowner Jonathan Abram.

Boris Feldblyum

Living Room of renovated Rosedale farmhouse.

Abram and his wife Eleni Constantine had been part of the losing neighborhood bid of $8 million, and they and other neighbors were skeptical they could raise the additional $4 million. "We held an emergency neighborhood meeting, and someone suggested we pass the hat. Everyone was amazed when we came up with $1.6 million in commitments that night."

This initial success prompted them to press on. By September, having partnered with The Conservation Fund and with **Gibson Builders LLC** for its technical construction expertise, the community was able to match the school offer and exercise its right of last refusal. The school challenged the neighborhood's right to match its bid, and the matter was ultimately settled after a climactic hearing before YFU's bankruptcy judge, who ruled for the neighbors.

Public Space Preserved

In the end more than 100 families, most of them neighbors, contributed to the complex transaction. Four million dollars went to purchase the farmhouse's three acres of south lawn to be retained as public open space. The park was originally acquired by The Conservation Fund with contributions from neighbors and other preservationists, and has since been deeded to the Rosedale Conservancy, a nonprofit land trust chaired by neighbor Roger Pollak formed for the purpose of preserving and protecting the farmhouse's terraced lawns where neighbors, their Frisbees, and often their dogs, now reign supreme. Having been granted tax exempt status by special act of the DC Council, the historic grounds will remain forever preserved in the land trust created by concerned citizens.

Jonathan Abram and his family moved from their house around the corner into the Rosedale farmhouse where their front lawn sweeping down to Newark Street is happily shared with neighbors. The old house is restored to its former glory, the hulking dormitories/offices are now gone, the original guest house has been refurbished as a handsome single-family home, and on the north side of the property fronting Ordway Street, five new homes appropriate to the scale and character of their surroundings have been constructed.

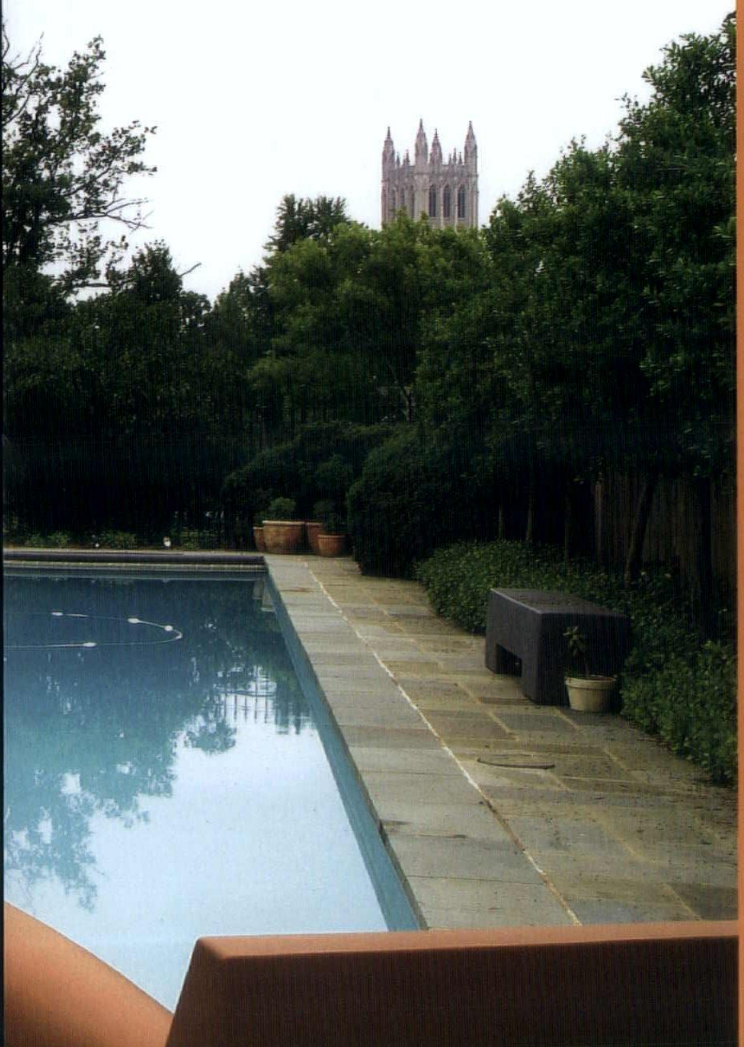
Views to the Cathedral from the farmhouse pool.

Apparently even the Jewish Primary Day School is happy these days. Abram reports that one of the school's representatives that he "butted heads with" says that after its bid for the Rosedale property failed, the school purchased a property on 16th Street for less money and in a neighborhood that welcomed them with open arms. "It seems the school could not be happier," says Abram.

So, is Rosedale a model for successful community planning? Can similar win-win scenarios play out in other city neighborhoods threatened with unwanted development and loss of historical treasures and community amenities? Or is this a solution only for upscale neighborhoods where residents can bring significant cash to the negotiating table?

Jonathan Abram acknowledges that Cleveland Park's affluent and connected residents were essential to the preservation of Rosedale and its public open space. And, he says, Rosedale's place on the National Register of Historic Places made it easier to obtain special historic preservation tax benefits. However, he points to Cleveland Park's high property values that raised the bar for residents as they sought to acquire the property. In other less affluent communities, presumably property values would be correspondingly lower, perhaps more within reach of local residents' historic preservation efforts.

Whether a model for the masses or a solution for the fortunate few, the community activism that resulted in Rosedale's sun-dappled lawns open to the public and protected for future generations seems like an undeniably worthwhile effort.



Boris Feldblyum

Rosedale: The Farmhouse

by Denise Liebowitz

"It was an old house to begin with and it will be an old house when we're finished." That was the mantra of owners Jonathan Abram and Eleni Constantine as they renovated Rosedale, the 200 year-old farmhouse that is the centerpiece of Cleveland Park's latest preservation and development effort. Abram points with pride to the higgledy-piggledy way walls and ceiling meet in his living room, the rough patches of the exterior clapboards, and the huge hearth and original beams in what had historically been the kitchen. In planning the renovation of his historic house, Abram sought to assemble a team that shared his vision of minimal intervention. While he and his wife had to interview "at least a dozen" builders before finding **BOWA Builders** who understood his desire to make the new seem old, they hired **Stephen Muse, FAIA,** of **Muse Architects** without delay. "Stephen has enormous credibility with the historic preservation community, so he was a wonderful advocate for us."

Over the past few years Muse had overseen the renovation of a half dozen houses in the immediate neighborhood. "Having it fully surrounded, we knew Rosedale well. We truly wanted this one to look as if we had never been there," said the architect. "Given the historical importance of this residence and its relative good condition, our goal was to do the minimal amount of renovation work required."

The Muse design included adding two living room doors and improving the connection between the early stone structure and the later frame section with a reconfiguration of the back hall, stairway, and kitchen and breakfast area. The architect added a swimming pool (with drop dead views of the National Cathedral), removed one second floor bath and renovated other bathrooms, and restored all interior and exterior finishes. The result is an unfussy family home, inviting and lived in, with kids and dogs much in evidence.

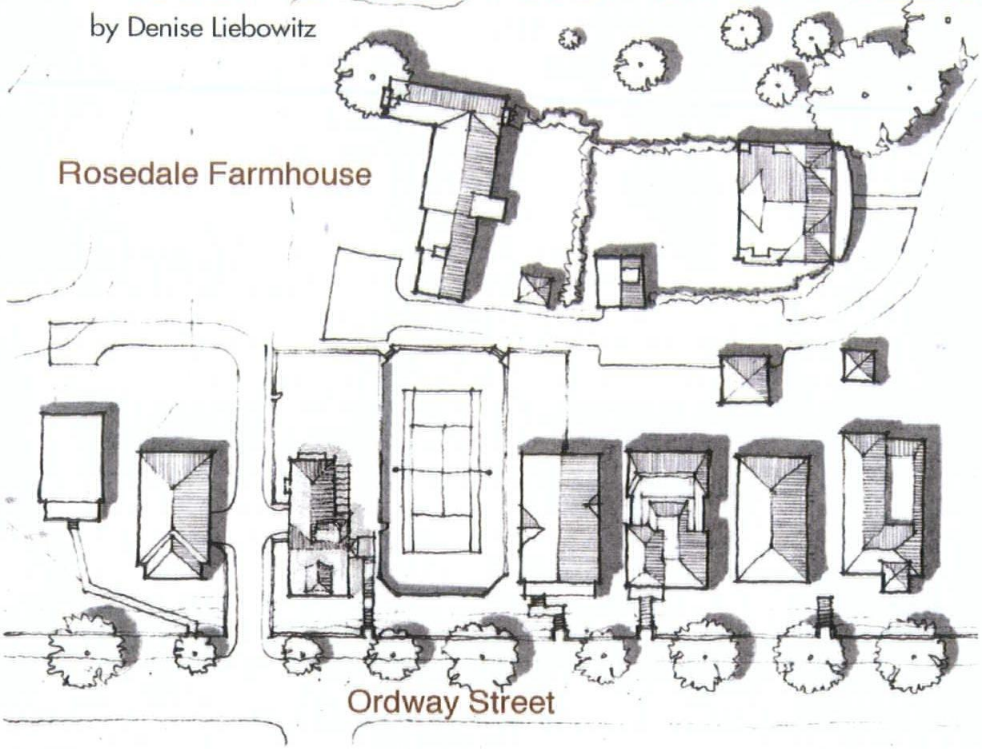
Muse points out that architects can take different approaches to a project like Rosedale. They can try to match everything in the structure and, according to the architect, risk extending already existing problems. Or, at the other end of the spectrum, they can intentionally match nothing in the belief that any new interventions should reflect the spirit of their time. Muse walks a fine line between these two extremes. "After careful analysis we choose to extend what is best about the existing context, while also mitigating its problems. We only judge our addition/renovation work to be successful if the *entire* residence is greatly improved." Muse thinks his approach has been playing well to the historic preservation community. "I have been told that they often breathe a sigh of relief when they realize we have been hired for a project such as the farmhouse at Rosedale."

Jonathan Abram didn't start out with the intention of making Rosedale his home. He "had no thought about moving" from his comfortable house a few blocks away, until "the need to purchase the property came up." Now that he and his family have comfortably settled in after a two-year renovation, they are delighted with the way it has all turned out. Asked how he likes having a front yard where his neighbors are free to sled, stroll, picnic, and sunbathe he said, "About one or two nights a year I have to shoo away teenagers sneaking beers in the bushes, but otherwise it's amazing how responsible and respectful everyone is who uses this space. This is a bucolic place to live. After an intense day at the office when I come up to the house through this beautiful space it's like walking back through time."

Rosedale

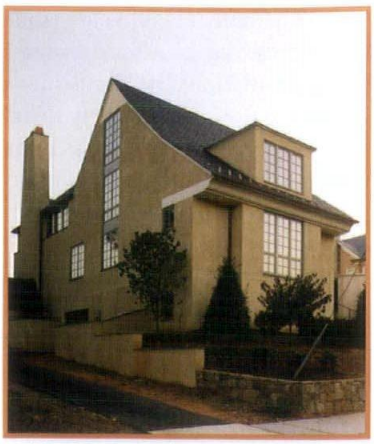
Pieces to the Preservation Puzzle

by Denise Liebowitz



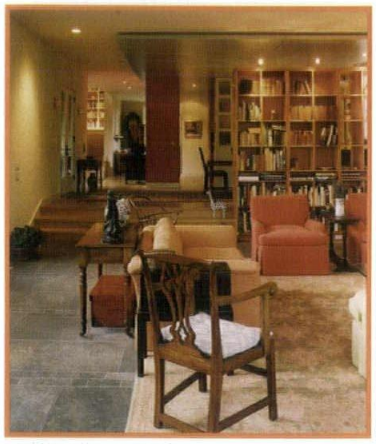
Richard Williams Architects

Site plan of Rosedale Estate with new houses and tennis court along Ordway Street.



Richard Williams Architects

Hall Residence exterior.



Richard Williams Architects

Hall Residence interior.

Keeping the Rosedale lawns open to neighborhood kids, dogs, and strollers required Cleveland Park activists to cobble together a complex real estate and financial package. To finance the purchase of the three acres of public park, the neighbors divided the remaining three-plus acres into eight residential lots for individual sale. Once the three old dormitory buildings were demolished, each of the new property owners hired their own their architect and went to work.

Architect **Dale Overmyer, AIA,** was in charge of the Marcou Residence on the parcel immediately west of the original farmhouse. Four other architects—**Michael Marshall, AIA; Richard Williams, AIA; Steve Bannigan;** and **Sam Dunn**—were responsible for building the five new homes and shared tennis court that went up along Ordway Street on the northern edge of the Rosedale Estate. The meticulous construction is by **Gibson Builders LLC,** which also served as a key development partner. Also central to the project was **Stephen Callcott, Architectural Historian** from the city's **Historic Preservation Review Board.** "Steve was glue that held the project together," said architect Michael Marshall. According to Callcott himself, "The new construction along Ordway is successful in achieving the goals of being compatible with the historic district and less intrusive on the landmark…"

In a collaboration that by all accounts was highly rewarding, the architects worked together to make certain that the new homes related comfortably with one another and integrated easily into Cleveland Park's historic neighborhood. Marshall worked on the Bray Residence at 3510 Ordway and in many ways the project was a near-perfect fit for architect and client. "My client had spent time in Italy and wanted something of that Italian style," said Marshall. "I had spent time in Italy on a fellowship, so there was an immediate connection."

Noting that the side elevations of the house are mostly hidden from view and that the structure is "not really sculptural," Marshall focused on the front and rear facades. The street facade is the "stately and calm" face that the owner sought, while the rear façade boasts an enclosed loggia with big arched windows and doors. The interiors are "a bit more exuberant," said Marshall. His client had specific ideas about the layout and wanted the sunroom/dining room to stretch across the back of the house. For the "inboard" living room the architect pulled in plenty of natural light with dramatic skylights.

Marshall recalls collaborating with other architects working on Rosedale projects to coordinate the backyard fencing of each house. "Together we developed a palette of colors and materials for screening the shared rear service drive." He now regrets, however, that the five did not work more closely on resolving several other design issues, particularly the treatment of the steep entry steps for each house leading up from Ordway. He wishes they had designed more shared landings and terraces to break up the climb from the street.

The clients of Richard Williams purchased the easternmost and last remaining lot, which came with site constraints that others might have found undesirable. The Hall Residence sits squarely between the tennis court and a shared driveway providing access to several interior lots. For Williams and project architect **Tim Abrams, AIA,** these features offered design opportunities. "There was no throw-away side on this house," he said. "The structure has four viable facades." Because it abuts the tennis court, the house is open to more natural light and the architect was able to use the tennis court wall to form an entry area for the house. The side driveway provided a way to soften the steep grade up from Ordway, and the narrow footprint of the project takes maximum advantage of the rear and side yards.

The house recalls an Arts & Crafts aesthetic that makes it distinct from its neighbors but stylistically compatible with the surrounding historic district. The principal interior spaces on the ground floor are defined not by partitions, but by millwork, floating ceiling planes, and a vivid red stucco wall. "The exterior," said the architect "fits in well contextually, although the interior is quite modern. This was a real treat to build a not-so-big house, for wonderful clients in a great neighborhood."

In describing the architects' collaboration, Williams remembers several gatherings where they each "pinned up their work" and used a large site model to plug in their individual houses. Having worked on other large collaborative undertakings, Williams said he felt very comfortable with the process. "We all just sort of got it."

Both Williams and Marshall point out how the ensemble of new homes evokes an almost rural setting, nestled against the leafy Rosedale preserve, and complete with extraordinary views of the Cathedral. To Williams, "it feels almost like having a house at the edge of a country village."

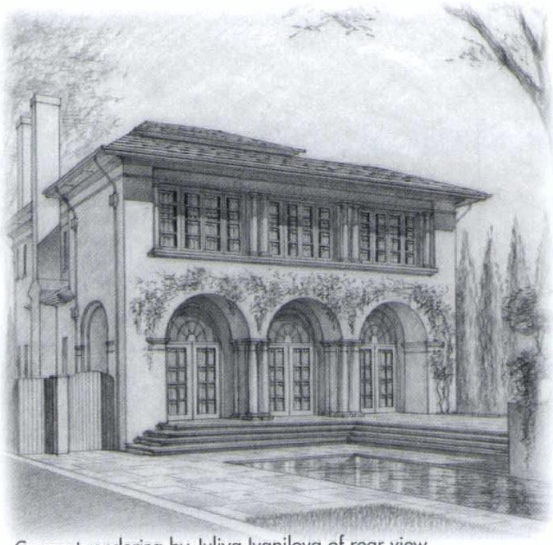
Tour the Rosedale Estate including the restored farmhouse and two of the new homes during Architecture Week. Saturday, September 9. See Architecture Week calendar, page 36, for details.

Richard Williams Architects

Hall Residence rear view.

Michael Marshall Architecture

Bray Residence interior.



Michael Marshall Architecture

Concept rendering by Juliya Ivanilova of rear view of Bray Residence.

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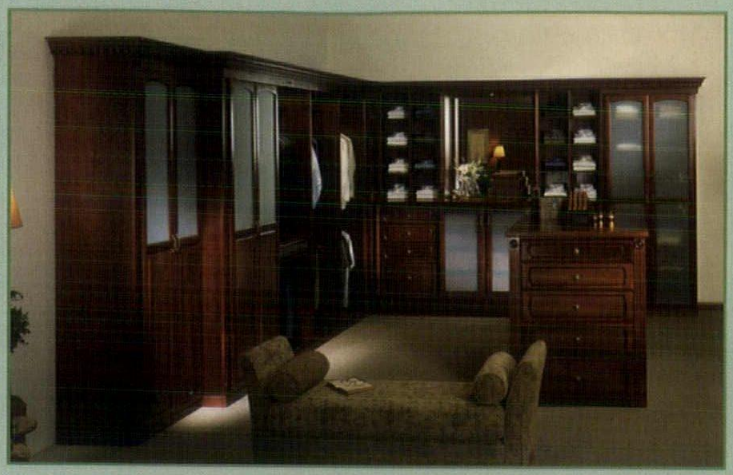

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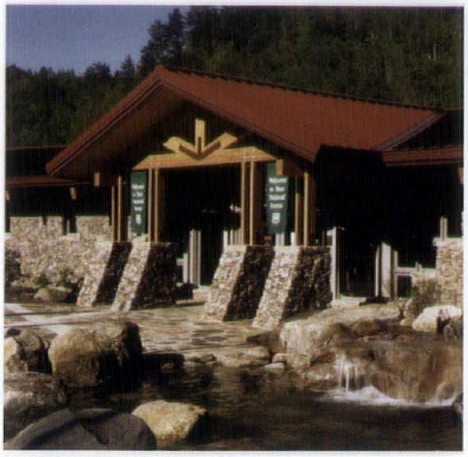

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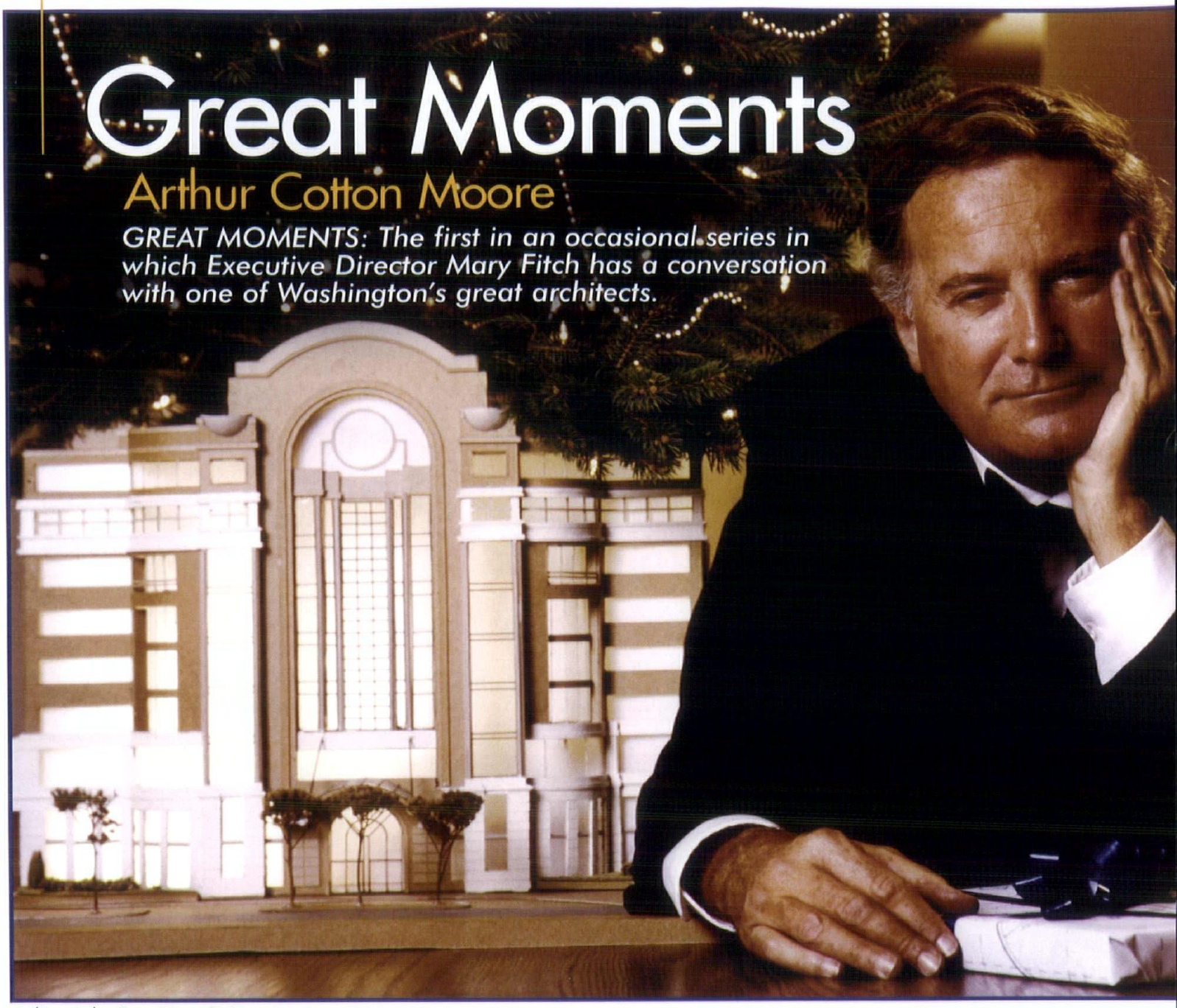
Great Moments

Arthur Cotton Moore

GREAT MOMENTS: The first in an occasional series in which Executive Director Mary Fitch has a conversation with one of Washington's great architects.



Architect Arthur Cotton Moore, FAIA.

In a career that has championed modernity, preservation, and fresh urban visions, **Arthur Cotton Moore, FAIA** is a renowned figure in American architecture. His work includes some of the most notable buildings in the nation's capital including the renovation of the Library of Congress and the Old Post Office Building and design of Canal Square and the Foundry in Georgetown, the Washington Harbour complex on the Georgetown waterfront, and the Portals Project, a mixed-use development that includes the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Southwest Washington. In a style he has termed "Industrial Baroque," Moore offers a highly personal response to one of architecture's fundamental challenges, the synthesis of history and modernity. For more than four decades Moore's has been a provocative voice calling to arms those who care most about the future of our cities.

When did you know you wanted to be an architect?
At Princeton you didn't really major in anything – it was general studies. But I was directing myself towards history, or the Foreign Service, or law. Conventional. But I really enjoyed architecture—it was love at first sight. My roommate was in the architecture school and they always put his drawings at the end of the line and he was getting the idea that he should not pursue it. But he said to me that I should come [to the class]. So, I went to audit for a while and it was just magical. And fairly soon they were putting my drawings at the front of the line!

Which architects have had a major influence on your work?
Did you see the movie "My Architect"? I tell everyone my great claim to fame was being Louis Kahn's chauffeur. He had flowing white hair at that time and he gave seminars at Princeton and I would go pick him up at Princeton

Junction. I was selected because I had a wonderful little snappy black Jaguar coupe. So, his white hair and the black coupe—it was just perfect. And I would drive him. I would purposely take a circuitous route, showing him all these terrible buildings, and I could never get him to comment. But Kahn was a wonderful influence, just in the way he took a unique point of view.

At the time at Princeton you also had Buckminster Fuller who was somebody who gave you an incredible new approach. He saw things through his own eyes and would always look at the world in a way you could not believe. He was truly a genius in this way. If you could stand his four- or five-hour lectures—he would never stop talking.

And then we had Enrico Peressutti who was a famous architect in Italy. His firm built the great iconic tower in Milan [Torre Velasca]. He was very interesting. He was an ex-guerilla fighter in World War II and he would come with his mistress. He was quite exciting.

Such glamour!

Yes, much glamour. Charles Moore (no relation) was my thesis advisor. He took absolute, constant delight in architecture. He made us all have sandboxes and we had little "to scale" plows and he made us get in our sandboxes and sculpt the land. He said he'd done that once and he was sitting in his sandbox when a client came in and fired him on the spot! Charles Moore was great. I'm trying to write a piece on preserving Postmodern architecture, and I went down to New Orleans to see his Piazza d'Italia because I thought it might have been destroyed, but it was fine. I think he did some wonderful projects and he had a wonderful light touch that nobody else has come up to.

Talk about your evolution as an architect. I look at your apartment building on Cherry Hill Lane in Georgetown, which is a beautiful, very modern design, and then, a few blocks away, at the more Postmodern Washington Harbour. How did you get from Cherry Hill Lane to Washington Harbour?

Yes, we did several what I would call standard modern buildings; Cherry Hill Lane and the Foundry, Canal Square, and another called CSC Square are in the straight Modern condition.

People don't realize how controversial Washington Harbour was, and it was not the design that was controversial, although people may think that now. It was truly a land-use issue. The question was whether there should be a continuous park there or whether the land, which had traditionally been used for commercial purposes, should be a combination of public space and private development. Because of the intensity of the situation at the time, it wound up as a seven-day trial and we had to demonstrate compatibility. So essentially, it was not really so much a Postmodern building, as it was a building of collective context that related not to the area directly around the Whitehurst Freeway, but rather to the area further north in Georgetown, because people wanted to see some echo of that down on the waterfront. At the same time I wanted to make a great celebration of the waterfront. So, there were multiple things that give it, shall we say, a more traditional aspect in people's eyes.

Is that how Postmodern got started, taking a Modern building and giving it more a historic context?

Yes. Remember we were in a historic district; people forget that. There was a need to have an important contextual echo. I would also argue that the great test of any waterfront plaza is popularity, and Washington Harbour is the most popular place on the waterfront. Both the architecture and the urban design are interesting and celebrate the waterfront.

I think that as preservationists, we are presently having an Oedipal moment. We hate Dad's design, right? We hated Art Deco for a while, we hated Victorian for a while. Now Art Deco is having a bounce, even doo-wop modern is having a bounce! We can't become too absorbed in the fashion of the moment, which right now is going back toward Modern. The Martin Luther King Library is a case in point. To me, it is beyond absurd that we may be tearing this building down. But just like every style, the majority of Postmodern is junk and should be torn down.

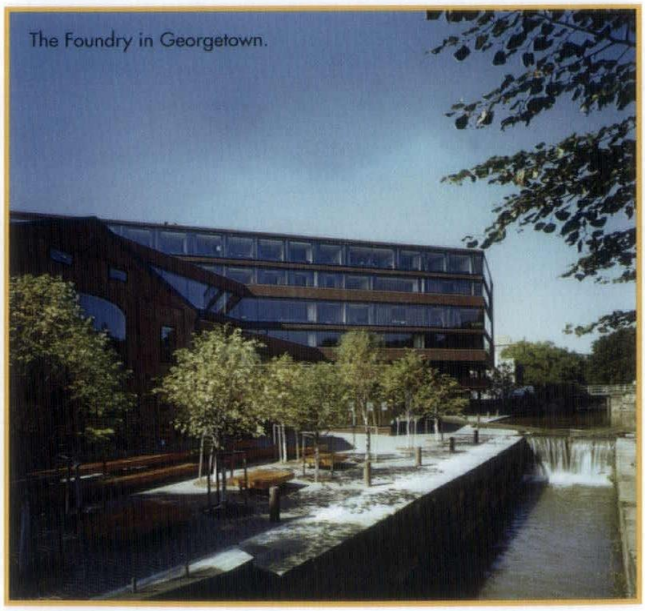
So, there were worthy things done in Postmodernism and I do think there will be a revival—there always is. It's a cyclical taste, Right now, of course, it's very unfashionable. Each one of these styles or movements, or whatever you want to call it, should inform us and make us better.

Do you have a project that you think is your best work—one that you are particularly happy with?

Several. I did a house in Georgetown that is in an old carpet factory. That's one of the best things I ever did. Of course Canal Square was very good. We did a wonderful project in Corning, New York, taking an old bridge and putting in an art museum with lots of glass and linking the two sides of the city. I wouldn't focus on any single one.

Do you think local architecture is better or worse than it was in the past? Would you like to see something different in Washington architecture?

There is developing a middling kind of Postmodern in downtown architecture. The few buildings that are built in Washington's old downtown are in a slightly denatured



The Foundry in Georgetown.

Washington Harbour by day and night.

Arthur Cotton Moore Associates, PC

Arthur Cotton Moore Associates, PC

Postmodern style. There is a Washington style of downtown office building that I find a little depressing. And we know the city is fairly hostile to avant garde design. The Gehry addition [a shelved proposal for the Corcoran Gallery of Art] and the Foster roof [the new courtyard enclosure in the Patent Office Building] are just two recent examples. Because of the process of going through multiple [review] agencies, very adventuresome things tend to get dropped. And I think that's a shame. In small-scale residential projects, people are doing some very interesting work, but in the larger projects they become quite tame.

Do you think the blandness in the architecture is due to the height limit?
The height limit does good and bad things. In a lot of American cities you have a tower and then a parking lot, and then a tower and then a parking lot. And that's really terrible for providing an active street life. By having this height limitation we have filled out the city and now developers are fighting like crazy over every little scrap because there are no sites left. In a way it's very good to have the city filled out so you aren't walking by parking lots. The problem is when developers can't build high, they build dense and the building becomes one giant block. And what can you do with that block?

Do you think the height limit should be increased in some parts of town?
I have always advocated that, but I would do it only for special design. The height limitation does have the benefit of filling out the city. But I would say there should be a clause for exceptional design. And everybody says, "Well, who judges the exceptional design?" But I think sometimes you know it when you see it.

How do you think Washington ranks against other cities? How do we compare to Chicago?
Washington architecture is very ordinary and very repetitive. We look bad in terms of the general architectural press. Washington is definitely considered a stick-in-the-mud. Wherever you go in Chicago you can just say I want to see "somebody's building" and the cab driver will take you right there. In Washington that's not the case. In Washington there is a general lack of interest.

And why do you think that is?
We have hotter buttons. We have the government, and there is so much going on in Washington, it's a power city. How can you talk about architecture when you're fighting wars and there are people coming home in body bags?

What about New York?
New York has not had a great track record. Look at the fight over Ground Zero. The new Freedom Tower, as it's called, is going to have so much freedom that it will have 40 feet of concrete. This is atrocious—it's almost as bad as closing Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House.

You could say New York had a great bloom in the 30s and that it has never recovered that vigor. That's been ceded to other places—Seattle has this wonderful library by Rem Koolhaas and LA got Disney Hall, but we didn't get anything in Washington from Mr. Gehry. There are cities that are more open and Washington is not looking for a first-class building.

But I think the city is maturing. I can remember a time when Washington had only one legitimate theater. David Levy, formerly of the Corcoran, tells me that now Washington is second only to New York in the number of theaters and theater companies, which is incredible. My argument always was in the past that art and culture are parasitic to power and I guess with Washington it just takes more time. Obviously, great things came to Paris and Rome and London in their times of ascendancy and power.

Do you have any favorites among Washington architects?
We always thought of our practice as the Arthur Cotton Moore University. There are at least 16 firms started by our alumni. Some of those alumni include Shalom Baranes, David Cox, David Schwarz, Eric Colbert, George Gordon, David Jones, and Darrel Rippeteau among others. Lots of folks.

What do you think are the major challenges for Washington architects today?
I think there needs to be more experimental work. In fairness, it is very hard, because of the culture of the city that is very conservative. I was appalled there was a Modern building being "re-facaded" into a more traditional style. And people are saying, "Isn't that wonderful." I don't think it's wonderful at all!

But the situation is changing dramatically. People have done some very dumb things to try to attract people back to the city and it didn't happen. Now it's finally happening. It has been a very conservative city, but it is on the cusp of real change. So I would encourage Washington architects to keep trying and keep experimenting.

Tell us about your plan to expand the National Mall, making new space for museums and memorials and covering the railroad line that has become a real worry for local residents and terrorism experts alike.
If people shot at the railroad tank cars carrying chlorine, the resulting gas could kill 100,000 people, including, I guess, the federal government. People have been very upset about that. What we propose is to extend what we have done at the Portals Project, which is to encase the railroad into a secure structure so it can't be got at. We take two ideas—the coming tsunami of memorials and the need to protect and house the railroad—and do what the McMillan Plan actually proposes; that is to extend the Mall out toward the Jefferson Memorial and put an artificial hill over all the highway and railroad infrastructure that come into the city here.

The whole problem with Southwest is that it is not linked to the rest of Washington, so we would tie that

Arthur Cotton Moore Associates, PC

Conceptual plan of stairs connecting the Kennedy Center to the Potomac waterfront.

area back into the city and create a major memorial area without harming East Potomac Park; they can go on playing golf. To make a very strong axis we would move the Supreme Court to this new place. The Supreme Court has been at its present location for only a short time; it was actually a nomad for 147 years, at one time even operating out of somebody's house for a while.

For as long as I've been in Washington you have been known for your pro bono work, such as the Kennedy Center stairs [connecting the Kennedy Center terraces to the Potomac waterfront and Georgetown]...

Which we've almost got! I finally convinced the Park Service and they've got a million dollars to do the promenade to the edge of the Kennedy Center. Unfortunately, the great benefactor who was going to provide the money for the stairs, Philip Merrill, has just drowned. So I don't know where we are going to get the money now to finish the project, but it needs to be done. But anyway, the promenade, which will have a separate bicycle path, trees, and lights, will be very nice. The people who walk up and down, turn around and go back at Washington Harbour, aren't strolling—they're pacing! They need to get somewhere. The turn of the river is quite nice, like the Zurich lake front. It would be a wonderful place to walk on a nice evening.

You have been giving your ideas to the city for quite a while now. Why do you do that?

I ride around the city on my bicycle and say, "Why is it this way? Why isn't it that way?" I guess I am incurably curious. Some things are very obvious, like the blank façade of the FBI Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. There are other large ideas like putting in Washington's missing avenues and adding housing, which would be a great thing. And now protecting the railroad from terrorist attacks. Everything now of course is guided by terrorism and security. But these are things that should be done. Maybe not within my lifetime, but it's worth getting the ideas out so that they gestate.

Is there a project or an idea out there that hasn't been built that you think is really important for the city? Or is there something that was built—such as putting the Whitehurst Freeway along the waterfront—that you believe should not have been?

Well, the Whitehurst Freeway! That's an excellent case in point—I think it should be taken down.

There are a number of huge mistakes in Washington and I think one of the mistakes is that they put the E Street Expressway in the wrong place; the flow is not good at Virginia Avenue. I do think the Kennedy Center steps would be great. We need to make more out of our waterfront. As I always said, before Washington Harbour the city didn't have the sense that it was on a river. The Washington Channel waterfront is ridiculous with no sense of waterfront at all. So we need to develop the waterfront.

One of the other things I was trying to do and was stopped, is to create a ferry terminal for Rosslyn. Virginia is kind of shoved off the river as well. Rosslyn has 20,000 parking spaces that are empty at night. So people could come there, park in Rosslyn, and take a ferry boat across to the Kennedy Center and Washington Harbour. We'd have something like they have in Hong Kong. People can leave their cars in Virginia and eat and go to a show in DC.

We need what they have in LA—a "Temporary Contemporary" that gives Washington's burgeoning arts scene a place with constantly changing shows that are very experimental. There is a lot that needs to happen for what I used to call Dionysian side of Washington. The Dionysian side needs more cultural activities to balance the power and more recreational activities to make it a richer place to live. A place that has artists and theater also tends to be a place that generates new ideas, and that would be a wonderful thing for the city. In fact, you could say that cities without it are going to be gone and cities with it are going to flourish.

Concept plan for expansion of National Mall.

Arthur Cotton Moore Associates, PC

The Art of Architecture

by Ellyn A. Lester, CPSM, Assoc. AIA

Artistic inspiration on the back of a napkin. It sometimes really happens that way, and you can be the proud owner of a one-of-a-kind, back-of-the-napkin architectural sketch by one of the world's leading practitioners. In concert with AIA | DC's Architecture Week and as part of its fundraising and outreach effort, the Washington Architectural Foundation will auction off an extraordinary collection of impromptu and inventive designs by the likes of **Cesar Pelli, FAIA; Moshe Safdie, FAIA; Robert Venturi, FAIA; Steven Holl, AIA;** and **Charles Gwathmey, FAIA**—many literally on the backs of napkins. These gifts from their creators appropriately reflect the foundation's mission of service and education and its tagline—"Architects Serving the Community."

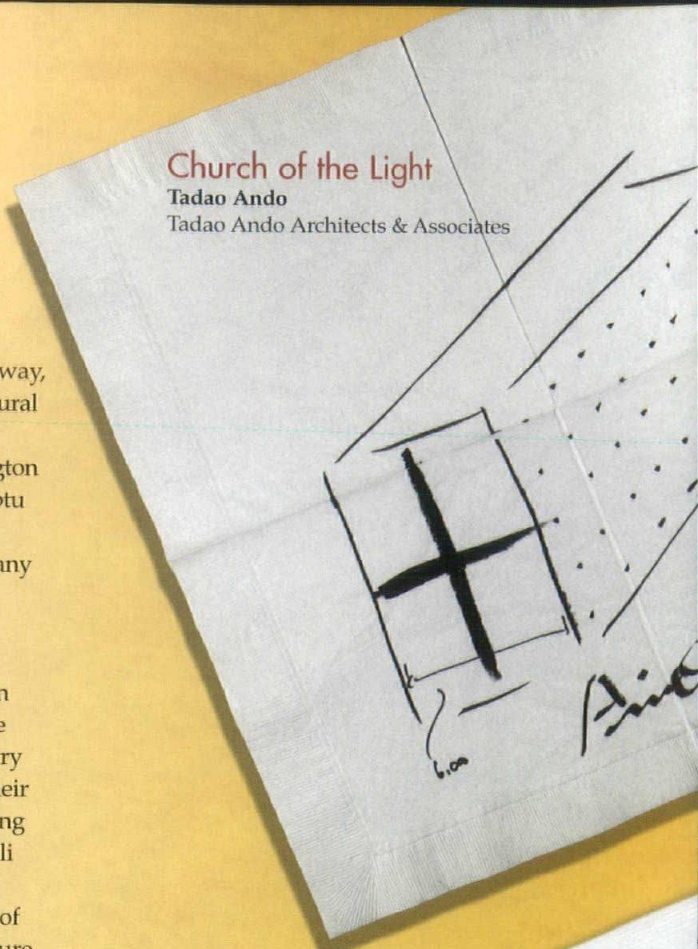
The Art of Architecture auction will be part of a sparkling benefit event on Friday, September 15. The entire evening is intended as a kind of performance art—participants closing out a busy and productive Architecture Week, industry vendors displaying their goods and services, high-profile architects offering their napkin sketches in both live and silent auctions, and lucky high bidders walking away with their unique piece of architectural genius. In describing his gift, Pelli said it was the most personal and material expression of "the obligation of the architect." The event is more than a mere fundraiser—it is the demonstration of the spirit of community services that is so central to the profession of architecture.

In examining the sketches, I was struck by their iconic nature. Whether an image of a building designed by another, such as Gwathmey's sketch of Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York, or a representation of one's own work, such as Pelli's Petronis Towers in Kuala Lumpur, the napkin images speak to a central function of the architect—that of interpreter.

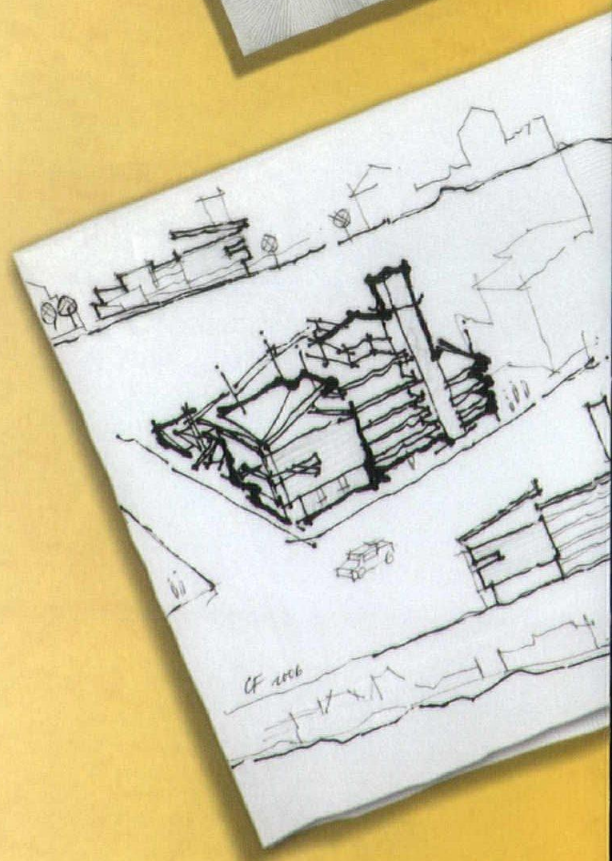
In interpreting her sketch, **Billie Tsien, AIA,** said, "My ideas are applied to architecture, but are rarely based in architecture. I get inspired by odd and different things. I've been looking at samplers and the idea of 'handwork'—women leaving a mark through a sampler…" When asked how her piece related to the work of Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates, she replied, "So much of our practice is 'circulation rich' because we deal with… we spend our lives in … indeterminate spaces." She continued, "Do you understand a place through your senses or through your intellect? [You should] be surprised by certain things. There should always be an element of surprise or humor…small places of play."

What struck me most as I interviewed these "star architects" was how nice they all were. Not a hint of ego—only pride in their work and gratitude that they were lucky enough to be able to do it. Pelli, for example, began by saying, "I try to contribute as much as possible to such art events; it's part of my obligation as an architect."

When asked about his inspiration for the sketch of the Petronis Towers, Pelli elaborated, "[It came out of a] sense of freshness in my view of building—a rough sketch—that captures the essence of a building and what makes them memorable. [It] represents [my] best known design. Most people recognize me for this work and I accept this image as identified with me. It was an external [decision]…and I accept it." The architect continued, "{It represents my] search for a way of designing contemporary buildings that would be seen as a way to represent [the] people of Malaysia. [I'm] very proud of the building; happy to make the sketch…a great pleasure."

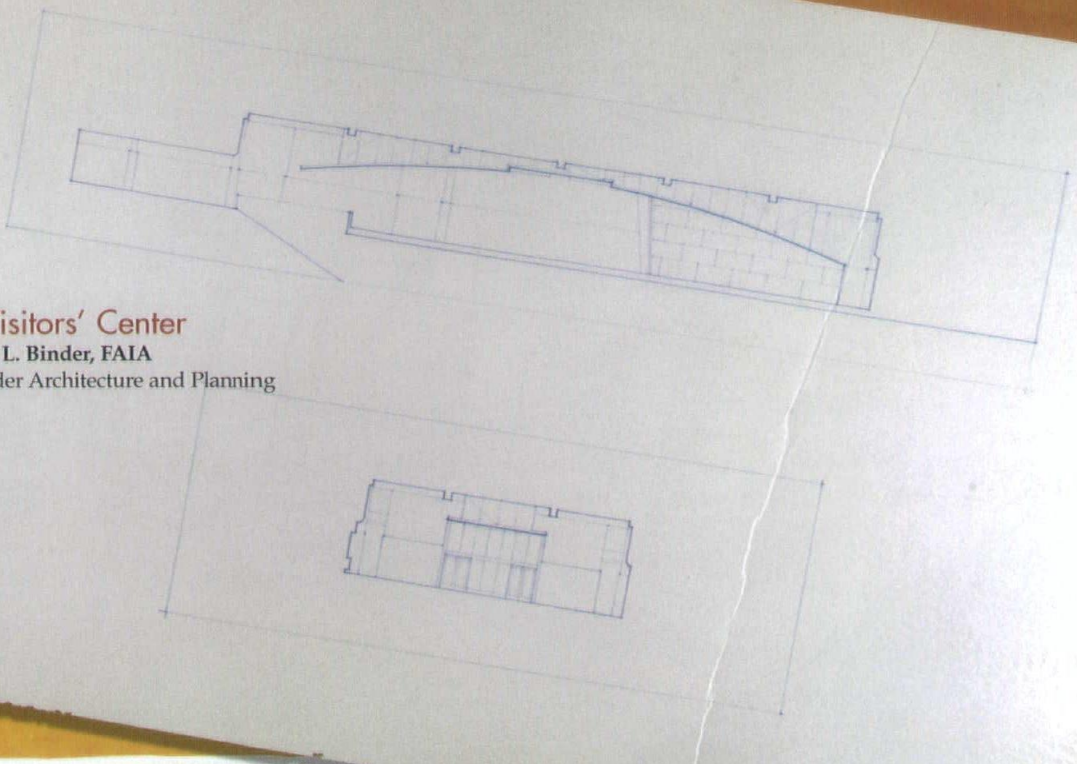


Church of the Light
Tadao Ando
Tadao Ando Architects & Associates



Study for Salvation Army Corps Facility in Anacostia
Colden R. Florance, FAIA
SmithGroup Architects

Don't miss your chance to own a back-of-the-napkin piece of architectural inspiration each handsomely matted by Newman Gallery & Custom Frames of Capitol Hill. The Art of Architecture auction will take place on Friday, September 15, 6:30 p.m. at the Galleria at Lafayette Center, 1155 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC. For more information and registration visit ***www.aiadc.com.***



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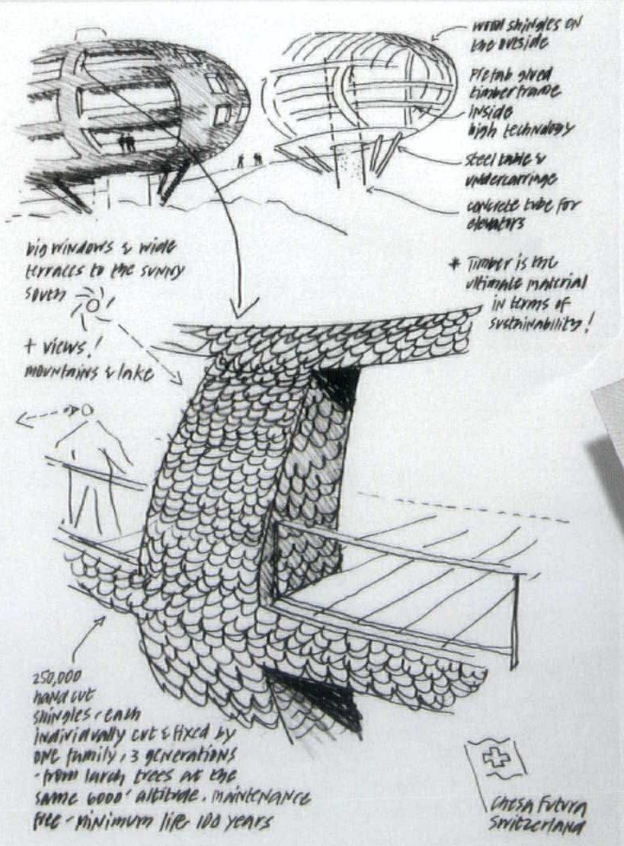

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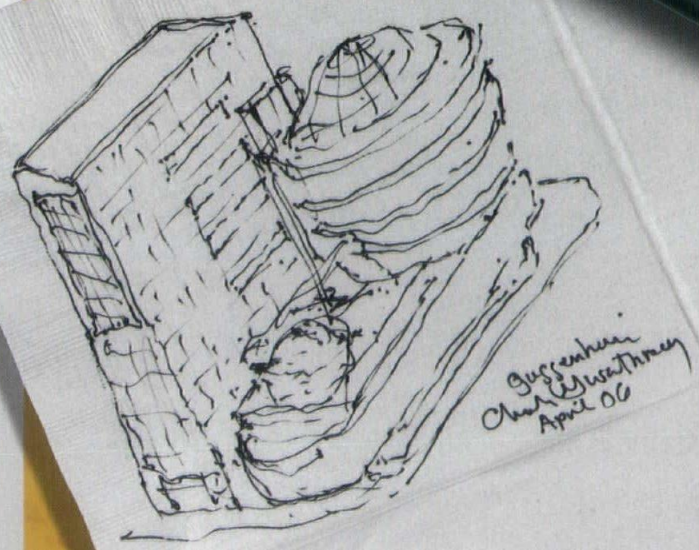
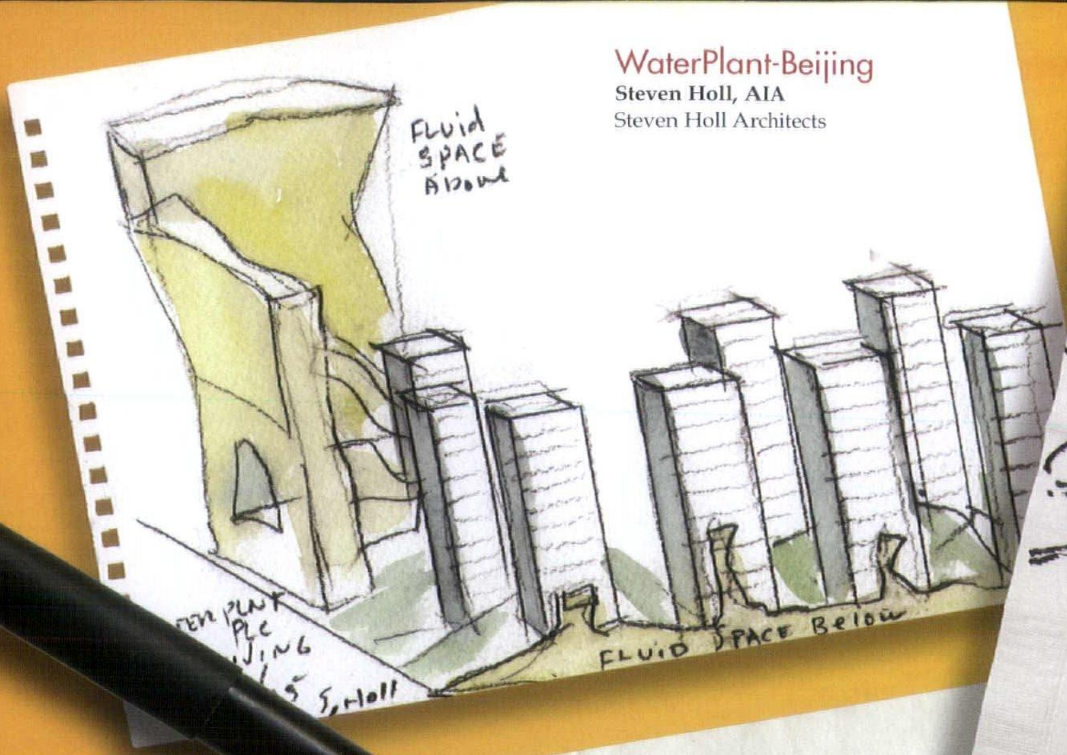


Guggenheim Museum

Charles Gwathmey, FAIA
Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects

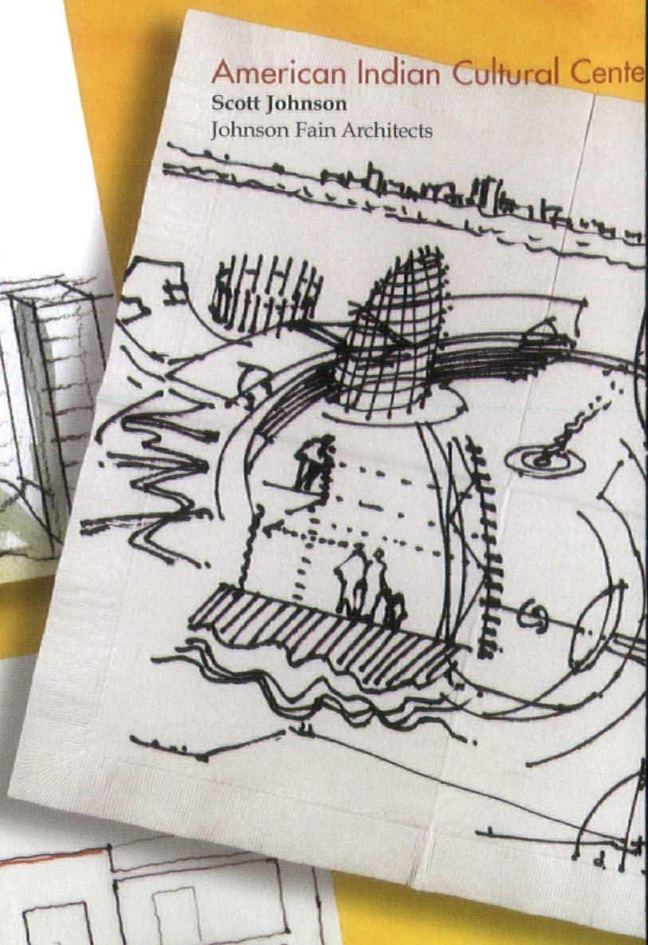
WaterPlant-Beijing

Steven Holl, AIA
Steven Holl Architects



American Indian Cultural Cente

Scott Johnson
Johnson Fain Architects

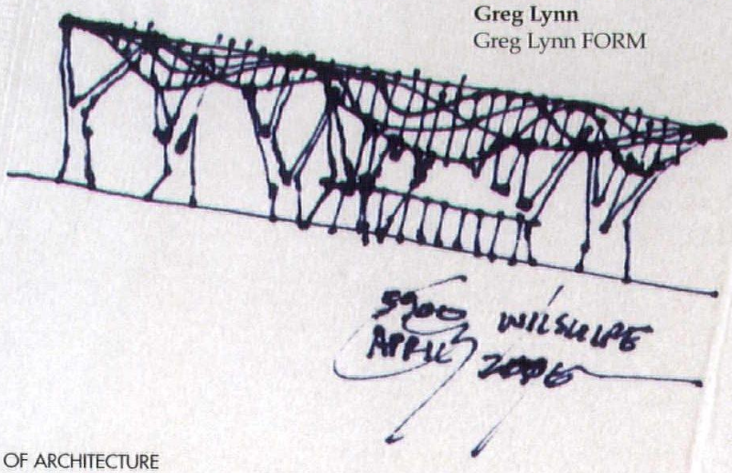


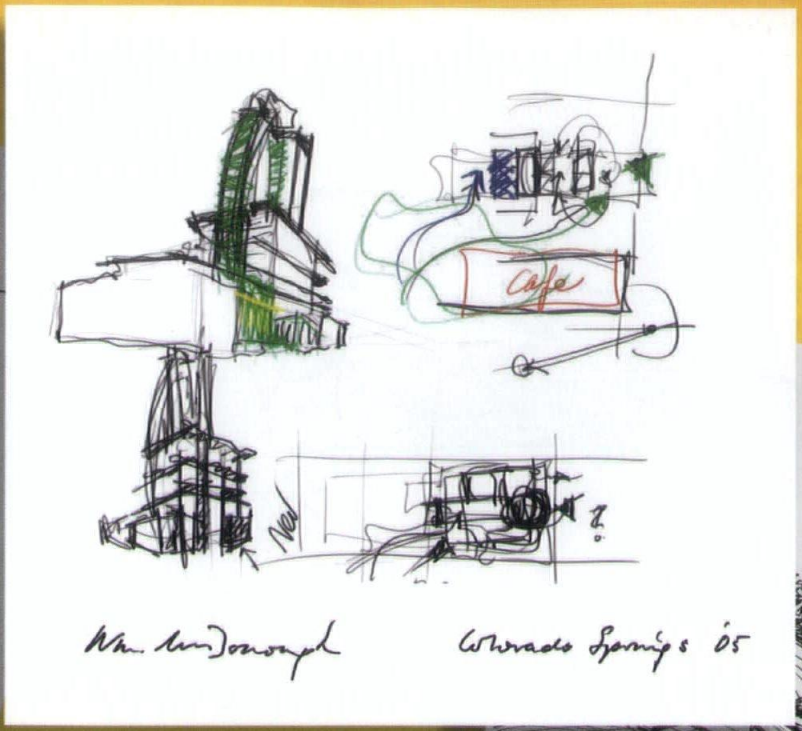
American University of Cairo Student Housing

Ricardo Legorreta
Legorreta + Legorreta

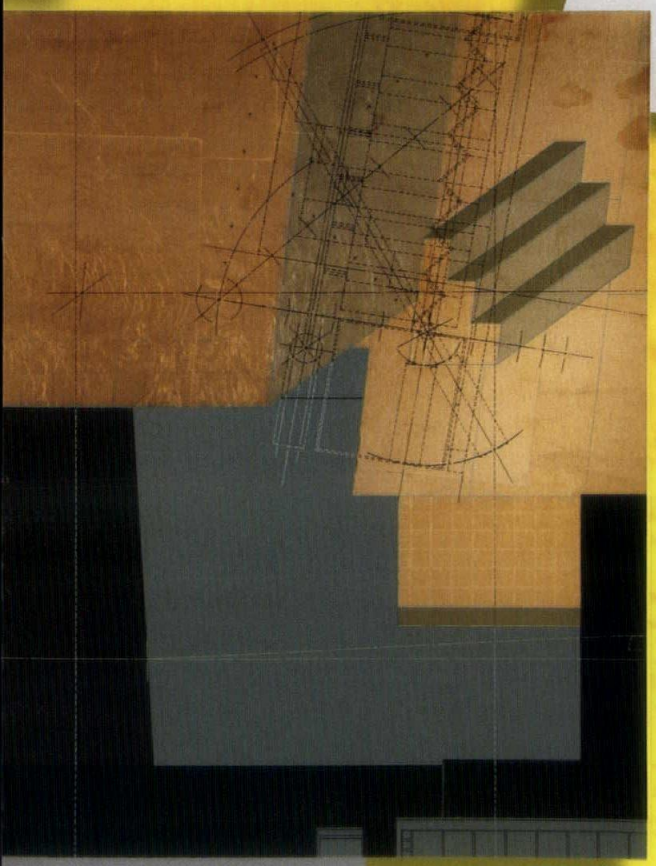
Wilshire Boulevard

Greg Lynn
Greg Lynn FORM



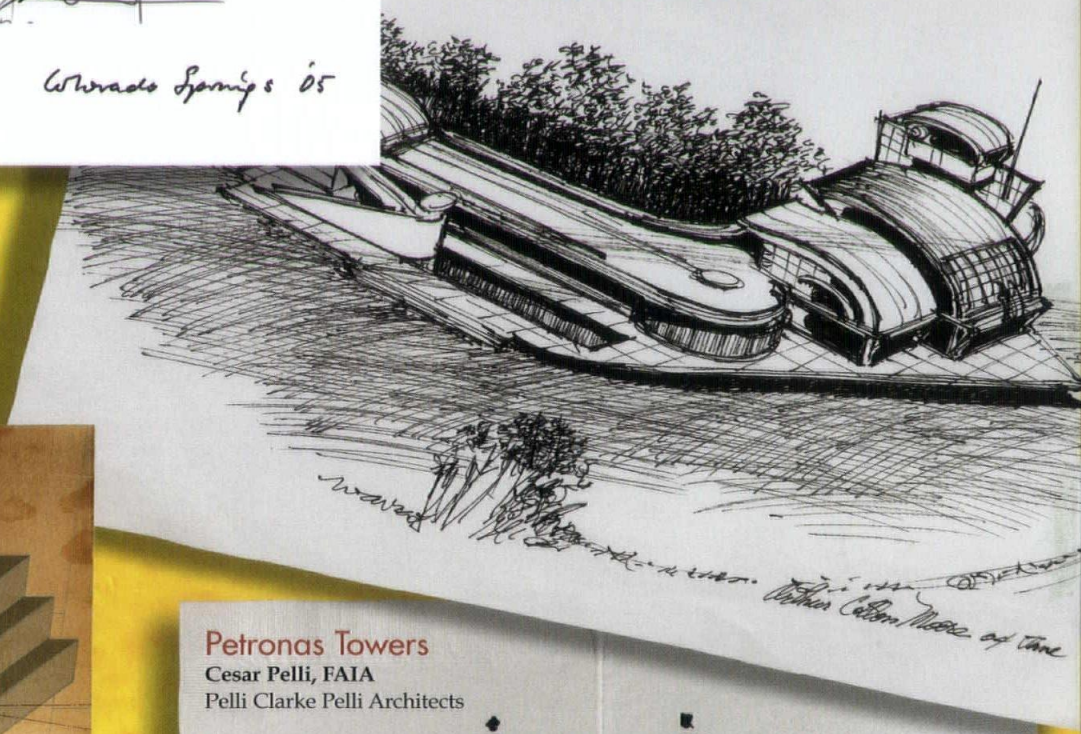


Pike's Peak Place
William McDonough, FAIA
William McDonough + Partners

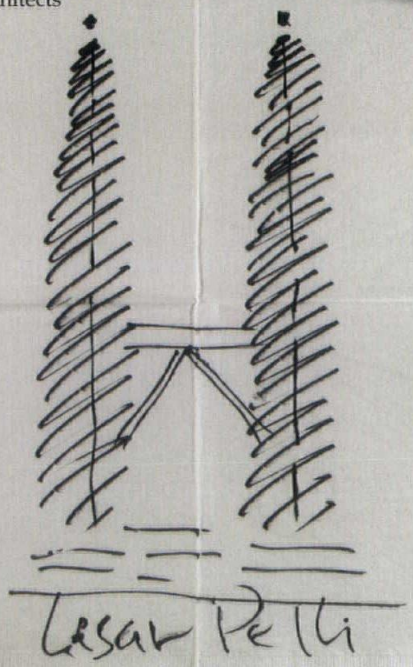


3 Steps 16/27
Thom Mayne
Morphosis

Benoni Point House
Arthur Cotton Moore, FAIA
Arthur Cotton Moore Associates, PC

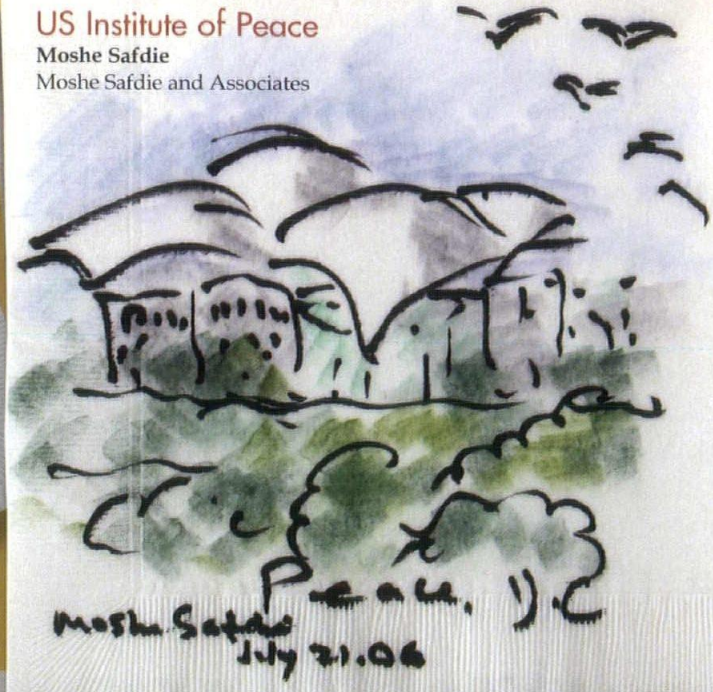


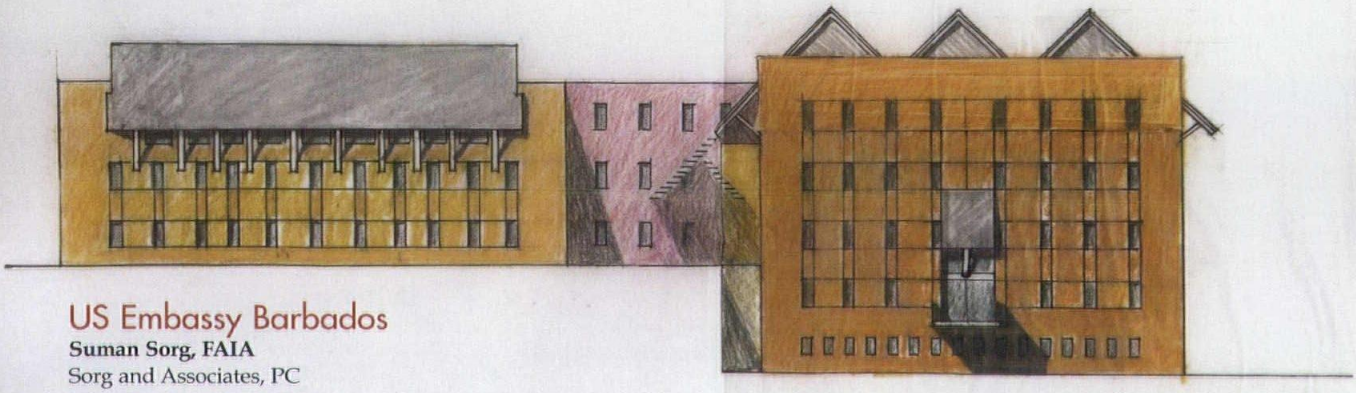
Petronas Towers
Cesar Pelli, FAIA
Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects



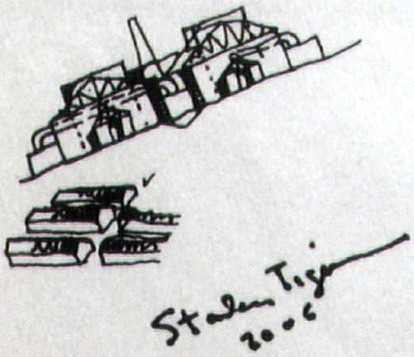
Pantheon "Urban UFO"
Antoine Predock, FAIA
Antoine Predock Architect, PC

US Institute of Peace
Moshe Safdie
Moshe Safdie and Associates



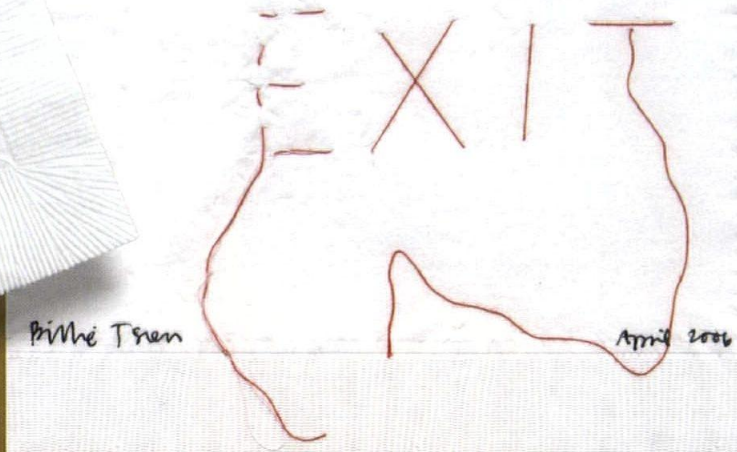


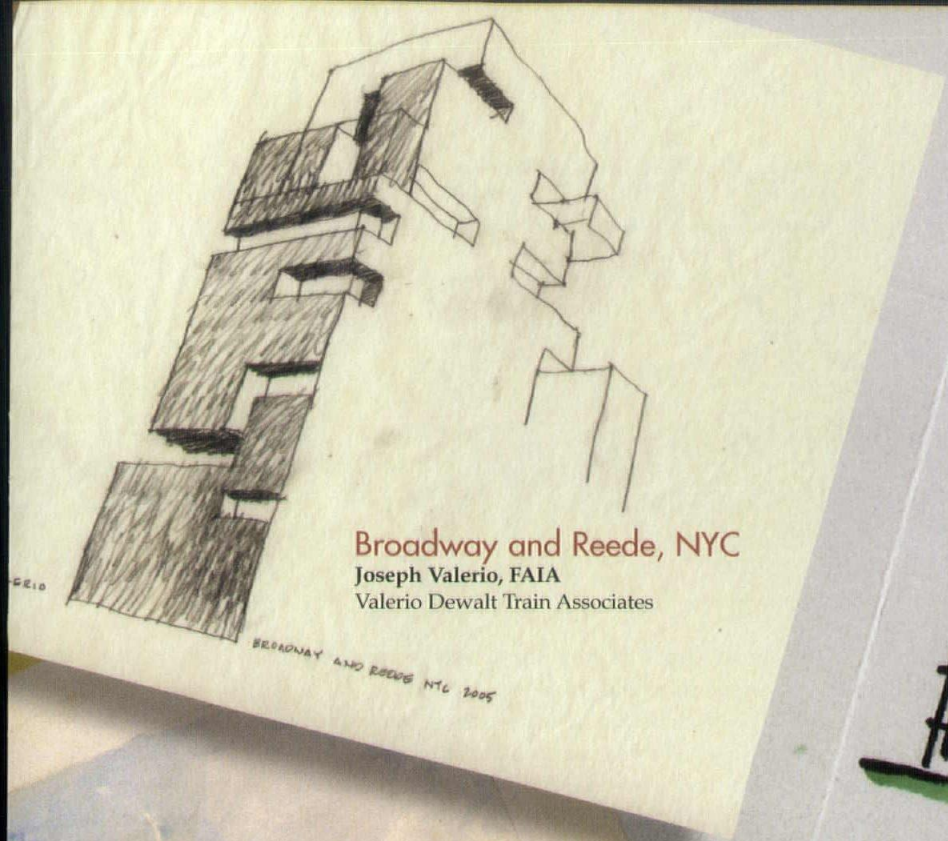
US Embassy Barbados
Suman Sorg, FAIA
Sorg and Associates, PC



Holocaust Museum
Stanley Tigerman, FAIA
Tigerman McCurry Architects

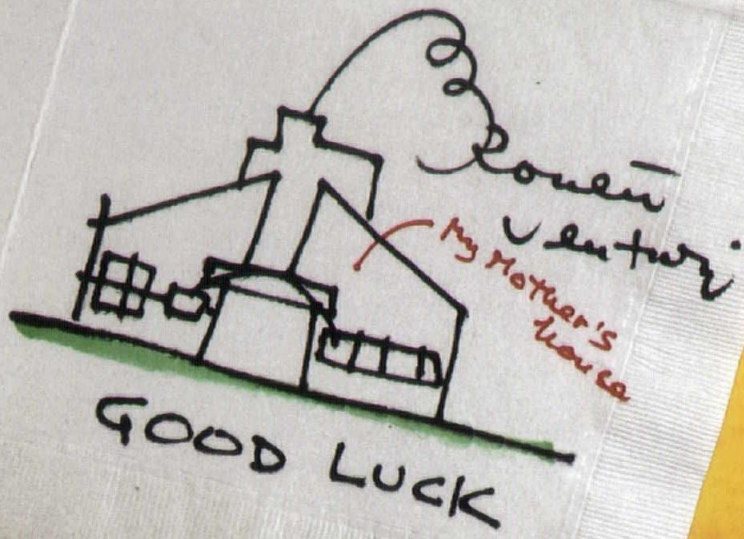
Exit Sampler
Billie Tsein, AIA
Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects

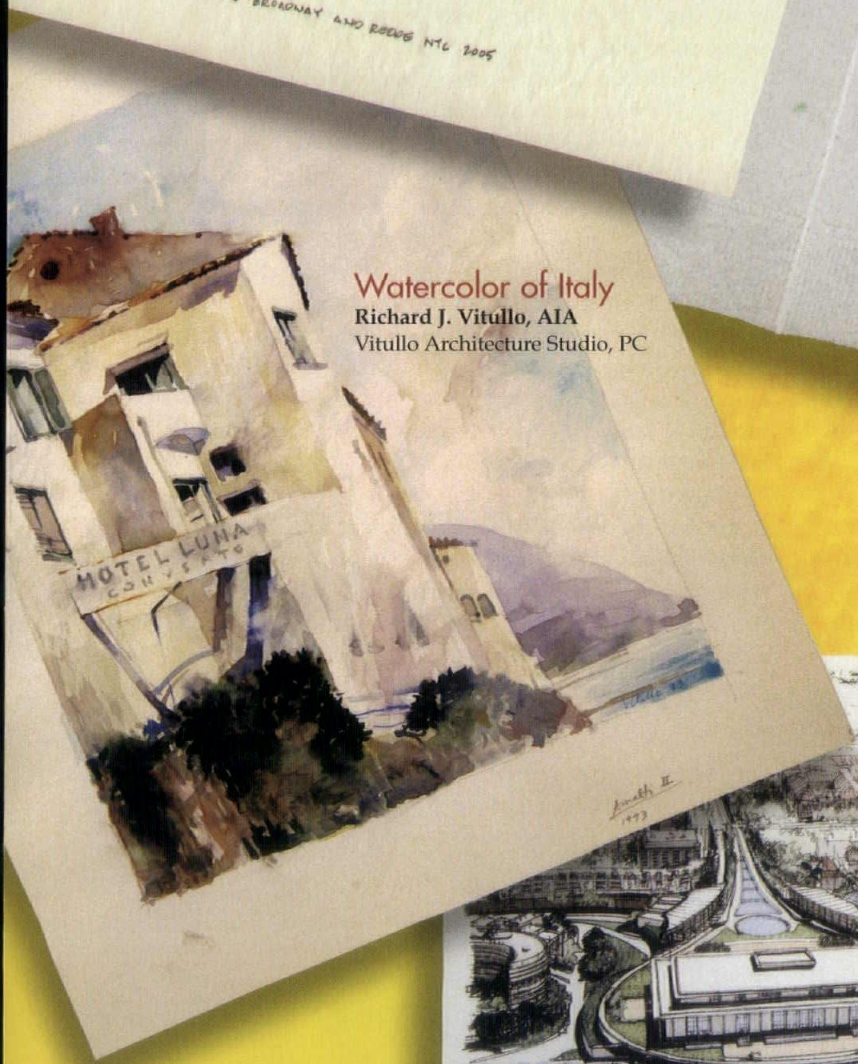




Broadway and Reede, NYC
Joseph Valerio, FAIA
Valerio Dewalt Train Associates

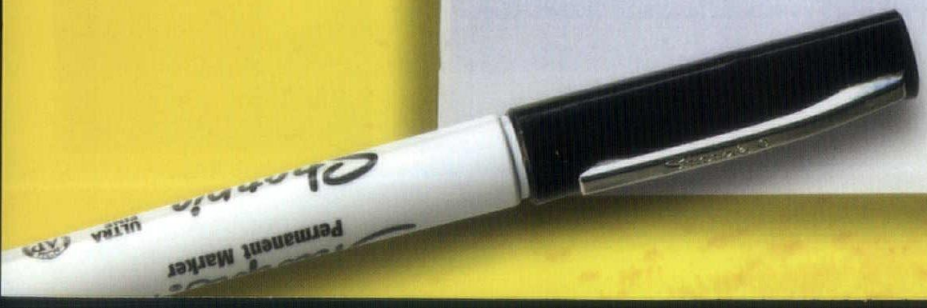
My Mother's House
Robert Venturi, FAIA
Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates





Watercolor of Italy
Richard J. Vitullo, AIA
Vitullo Architecture Studio, PC

JFK Center for the Performing Arts
Rafael Viñoly, FAIA
Rafael Viñoly Architects, PC



An Architecture Guidebook

Forty Years in the Making

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Documenting the Changing City

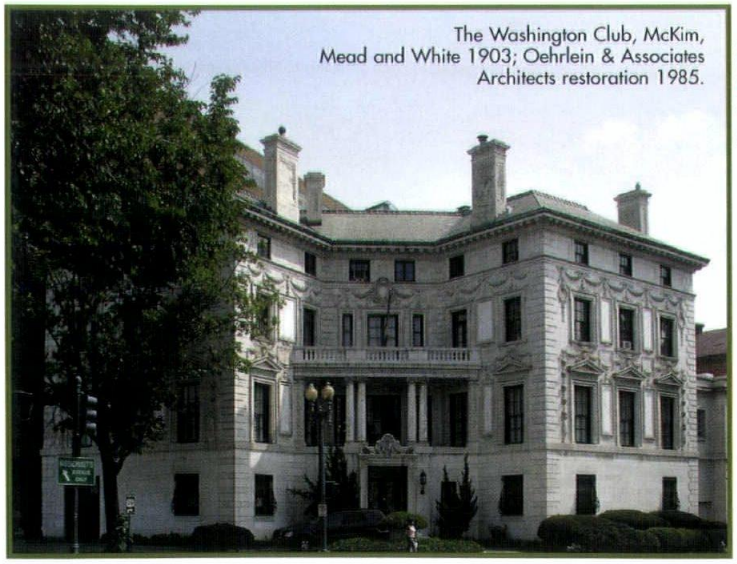
The AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, DC will appear in bookstores this fall. Photography by Boris Feldblyum.

Washington, DC, 1965: The nation's capital, like most major American cities, is hemorrhaging middle-class white families, who are moving to the suburbs in an attempt to flee what they fear is irreversible urban decay. Pennsylvania Avenue, putatively "the nation's Main Street," is lined with the dilapidated buildings that had shocked President Kennedy during his inaugural parade four years ago. Cheap, "temporary" government office buildings that have been standing for nearly half a century still occupy the western end of the National Mall. Area residents struggle to get around by bus or by private car, since the streetcars stopped running a couple of years earlier and there is as yet no subway system. But help is on the way, according to certain transportation officials, who have a plan for a comprehensive network of freeways, if only you don't mind obliterating some of the capital's most historic neighborhoods—the price of progress, they say.

It was in this context that the **Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects,** as it was then known, published the first edition of *A Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.* Written by a quartet of young architects who went on to become quite prominent—**Warren J. Cox, FAIA; Hugh Newell Jacobsen, FAIA; Francis D. Lethbridge, FAIA;** and **David R. Rosenthal**—the first guidebook makes for fascinating reading today, providing a glimpse into an era of dramatic changes in architecture and urbanism.

Such profound changes were not limited to the design world, of course. The few years immediately preceding the book's publication constituted an unusually turbulent period in the history of the nation, including Kennedy's assassination, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the landing of the first U.S. combat troops (as opposed to "military advisors") in Vietnam. Local events during this time included the opening of the Capital Beltway on the one hand, but also the convening of a commission charged with revitalizing Pennsylvania Avenue, and the successful effort on the part of President and Mrs. Kennedy to save the historic buildings around Lafayette Square from demolition. In short, it was an era marked by a dizzying mix of ominous and promising developments, both nationally and regionally.

Given the confusing time in which it was written, the first edition of the D.C. guidebook was a remarkably balanced and thoughtful work. The authors' concise and often witty entries not only afforded interesting insights into specific buildings, but also revealed broader themes, many of which remain relevant today, such as the city's ongoing struggle to find and come to terms with its own unique architectural identity. While not shying away from critical com-



The Washington Club, McKim, Mead and White 1903; Oehrlein & Associates Architects restoration 1985.

Boris Feldblyum

Boris Feldblyum

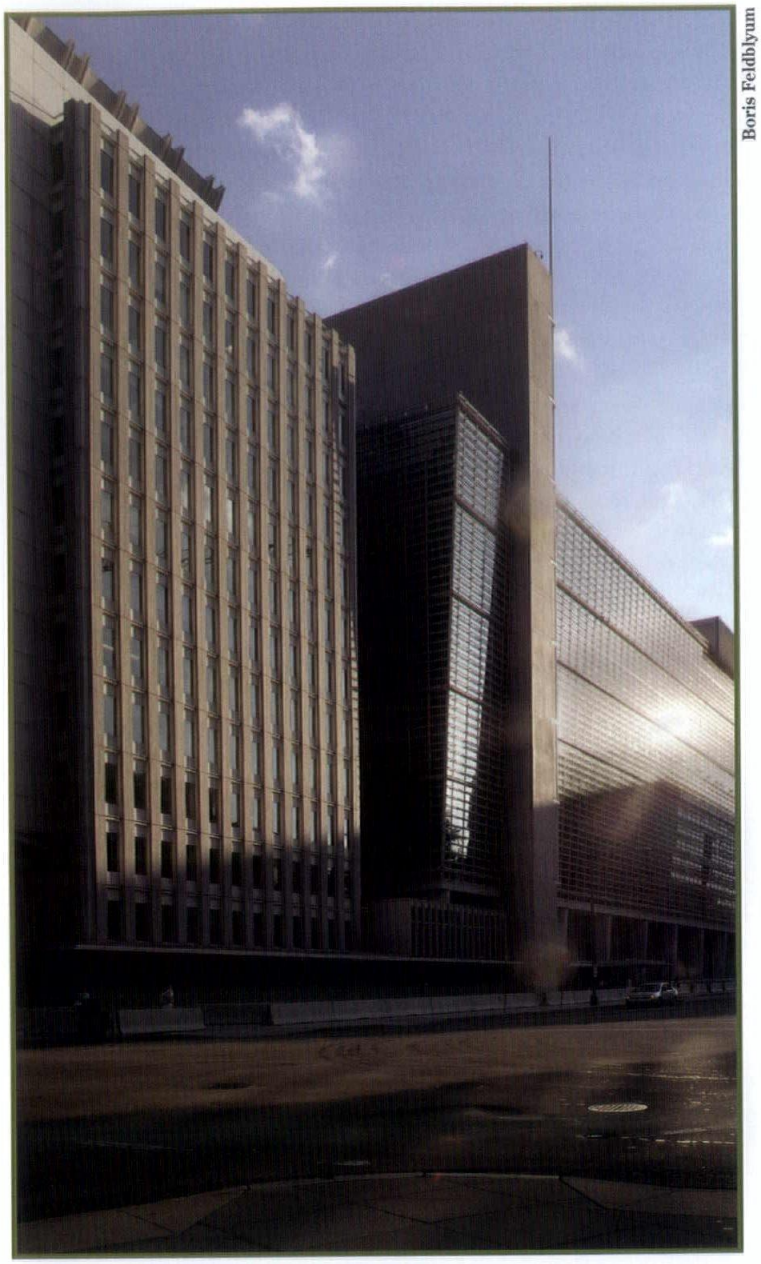
Cady's Alley master plan and bridge, Shalom Baranes Associates 2004.

mentary, the authors demonstrated a broad sensitivity to, and deep knowledge of, buildings representing many different eras and styles. The result is a book that holds up very well to scrutiny several decades hence.

The first edition practically flew off the shelves as soon as it hit the bookstores. Before long, the AIA chapter was at work on a revised edition, ultimately released in 1974. This second edition revealed profound developments on several fronts over the preceding decade. For instance, the long-planned Metro system was finally under construction, and a variety of new landmarks had begun to change the face of Washington—the national AIA organization had built a new headquarters for itself, and for better or for worse, the capital had a new cultural nexus in the boxy form of the Kennedy Center. Despite a number of added entries, however, the second version of the guidebook retained much of the character of its predecessor, and in retrospect—knowing of the multiple construction booms that hit Washington beginning in the 1980s—today's reader may look back on the first two editions of the guidebook with a certain nostalgia.

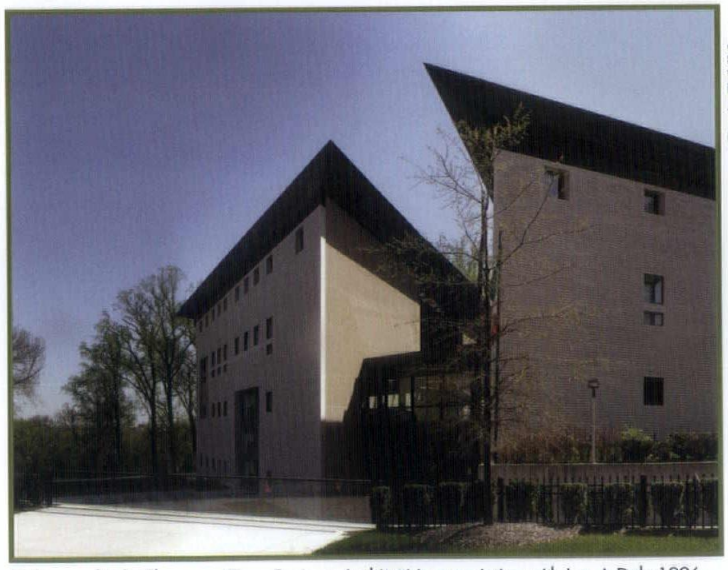
The third edition of the guidebook did not appear until 1994, perhaps because during much of the previous two decades, most local architects had simply been too busy keeping up with the growing demand for commercial and institutional space in the burgeoning capital city. By that time, the original four authors were committed to their active careers and therefore unable to take on the project again, so the Washington Chapter/AIA hired Christopher Weeks, an independent author, to revise and update the text. Moreover, the committee appointed by the chapter to oversee the project decided that the huge increase in the number of notable buildings in the area necessitated limiting the scope of the third edition to the District of Columbia proper. The resulting book was therefore quite different from its predecessors, reflecting not only a distinct authorial personality, but also the significant influence of the postmodern movement, which by then had profoundly altered the character of architecture in Washington and elsewhere.

Roughly four decades after the publication of the first guide, I was given the opportunity to write the fourth edition (now called *The AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.*), due to be published this fall. At first, I considered the offer with some trepidation.



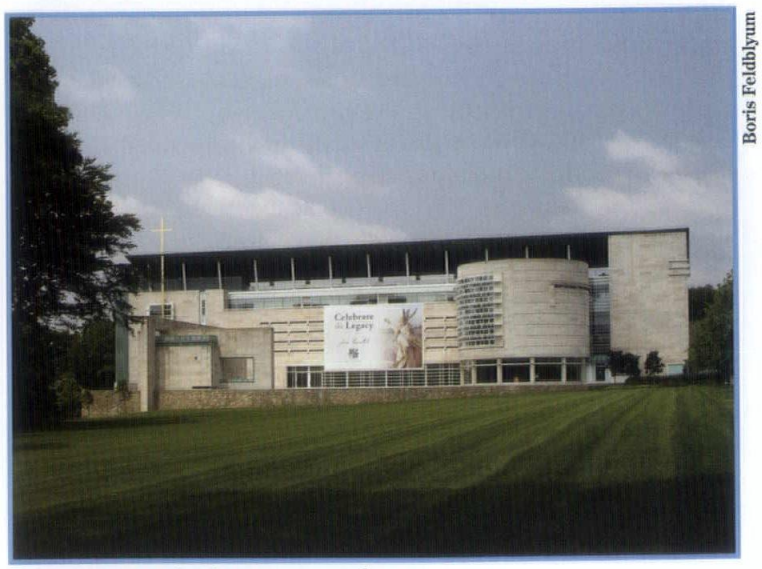
Boris Feldblyum

World Bank, Kohn Pederson Fox Associates 1997.



Boris Feldblyum

Embassy of Italy Chancery, Piero Sartogo Architetti in association with Leo A Daly 1996.



Boris Feldblyum

The Pope John II Cultural Center, Leo A Daly 2001.

For starters, it was daunting to follow in the footsteps of the four original authors, a couple of whom are now among the most widely known architects in the country. On top of that, guidebooks are notoriously difficult to write, in that they require the presentation of a huge volume of facts in a relatively small number of words. I soon accepted the challenge, however, and dove into what turned out to be a rewarding process of exploration, research, analysis, and discussions with many interesting people.

As I look out over present-day Washington, I am struck by the fact that the broad impression of the city is remarkably unchanged from the time of the first edition of the guidebook over 40 years ago. The city's famous height limit is intact, and by staying the same in this regard, Washington has thus become more different with each passing year from other American cities. Meanwhile, walking through neighborhoods like Georgetown, Capitol Hill, or Dupont Circle, one can still get a sense of the quietly genteel atmosphere in which President Kennedy's "best and brightest" debated plans for ambitious social change. Despite explosive suburban growth, the core in Washington has held, leaving us with one of the few American metropolitan areas in which a pedestrian-oriented lifestyle is still both plausible and pleasant.

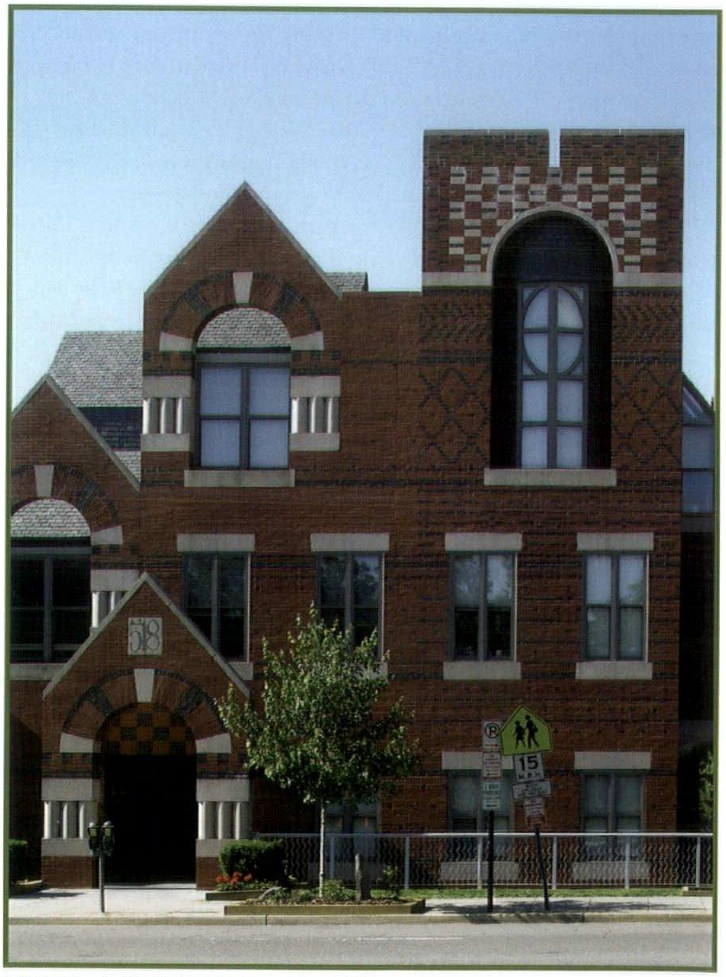
And yet, obviously, Washington has changed dramatically over the past four decades. I was reminded of this when a colleague recently gave me a copy of the January 1963 issue of *Architectural Forum,* which featured a special focus on the capital. Published just two years before the first edition of the guidebook, the magazine offered a stark assessment of the physical state of the city at that time. "Conceived in grandeur," the editors stated, "Washington is being executed in poverty of means and spirit." They sharply criticized the curious mix of blandness and pretentiousness that characterized much of the city's contemporary architecture (with the notable exception of the high-quality residential developments in the Southwest urban renewal area). Other articles in the issue contain shocking tidbits, such as the mention of a proposal to tear down the Patent Office Building to make room for a parking lot, or the report that, between 1956 and 1963, only one small new office building had been constructed in Washington's traditional downtown.

As I write this, that same Patent Office Building, now housing the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, has just reopened after a six-year renovation, overseen by **Hartman-Cox Architects,** which brought its glorious interiors back to life. Under construction is an exciting new glass canopy, designed by **Lord Norman Foster, Hon. FAIA,** which will shelter the building's previously uncovered courtyard. Once marooned in a semi-abandoned commercial zone, the former Patent Office Building now stands amid a vibrant area of shops, trendy restaurants, movie theaters, and a huge sports and entertainment arena. Within blocks of the site are thousands of people residing in newly constructed apartments, many of which sold for more than $500 per square foot. Meanwhile, the 14th Street corridor in Northwest Washington, devastated by the riots in the aftermath of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in 1968, now boasts high-end furniture shops, and the U Street corridor once again draws throngs of diners and nightclubbers following decades of neglect. There have been many similar stories of urban renaissance in recent years, and I am certain that the new edition of the guidebook will clearly reflect the generally optimistic spirit of early 21st-century Washington.

I am hopeful that the fourth edition of the guide will simultaneously seem a logical successor to earlier versions and stand as a readable and engaging book in its own right. The average entry is longer than in the earlier editions, reflecting an effort to address more overtly how specific buildings fit into the larger scheme of things. Of course, numerous entries have been added since the third edition— nearly 80 of them—and several dozen old entries were deleted for various reasons (a few of the buildings had been altered or destroyed, while some were eliminated in favor of other entries that could be used to make similar points). All of the existing entries were rewritten, though in many cases the astute reader will still find the occasional phrase or sentence carried forward from one of the first three editions.

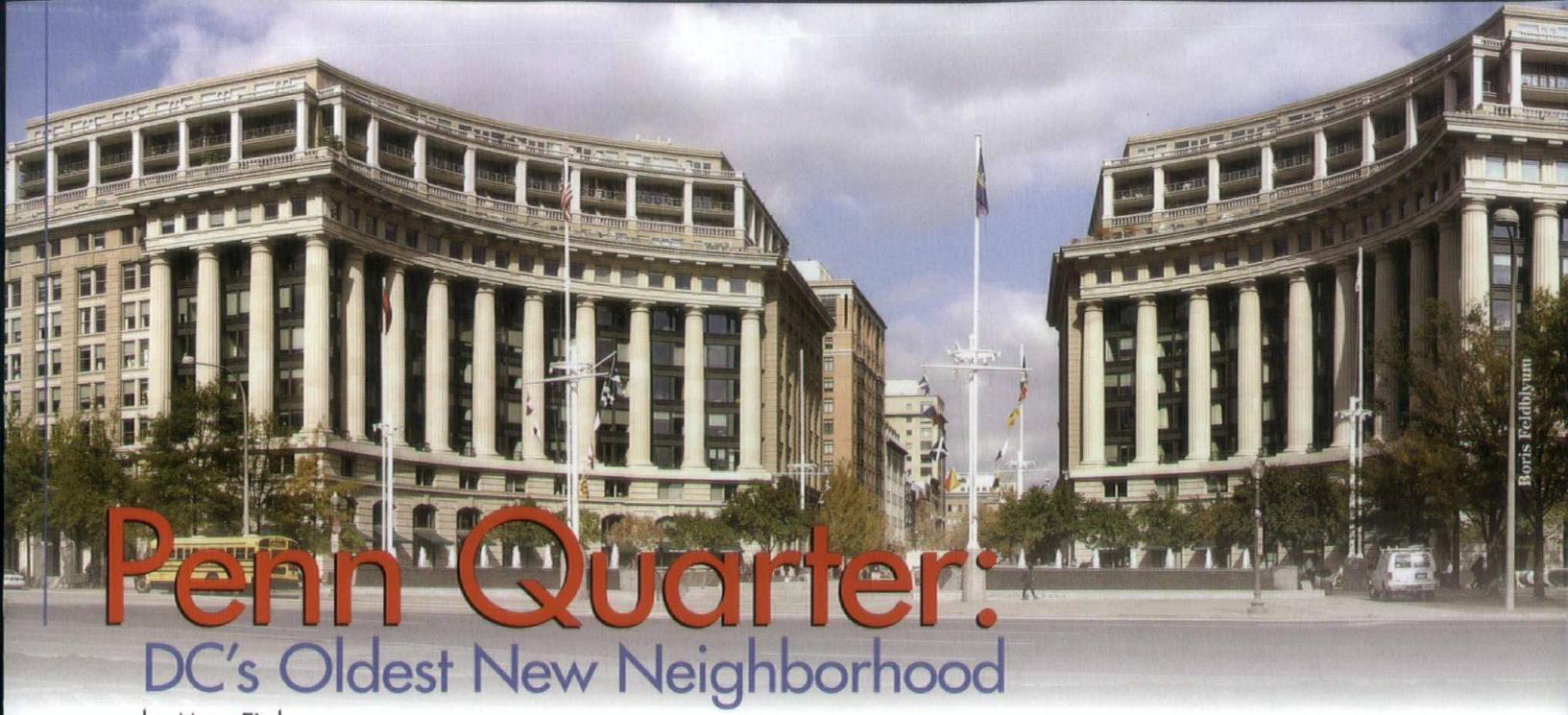
The new guide, like its predecessors, is neither a work of pure criticism nor a straight history. Ultimately, the goal of the book is to cause the reader—whether an architect or an amateur—to look at buildings in slightly different ways, and to consider why and how they ended up as they did. Personally, I also hope that the new edition will encourage those who know Washington—whether they love it, hate it, or have not yet decided—to think carefully and creatively about how best to pursue the never-ending work of building a capital city.

Hear more about the new AIA guide to Washington architecture on Thursday, September 14 when Martin Moeller gives a free lecture at the Chapter House. See Architecture Week calendar (page 37) for details.



Boris Feldblyum

518 C Street, SE, Weinstein Associates 1990.


Boris Feldblyum

Penn Quarter:
DC's Oldest New Neighborhood

by Mary Fitch

Penn Quarter is a new name for an old part of the city. Historically, the area was the location of Central Market, the largest of Washington's markets. It's also where Civil War photographer Matthew Brady set up his studio, and where Clara Barton, the founder of the Red Cross, maintained her office. In subsequent years, the area became the home of fabled DC department stores such as Kanns and Lansburghs.

In the 1950s, when interest in central cities began to wane, Pennsylvania Avenue and the adjoining Penn Quarter area began to decline. During John F. Kennedy's inaugural parade in 1961, the new president is said to have commented on the sorry condition of "the nation's Main Street." In response to concerns about the area's condition, the President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue was established in 1962.

Early planning for the area's recovery showed many grand spaces. For the example, the area that is now Pershing Park and Freedom Plaza was shown as single plaza that would have rivaled Moscow's Red Square in size. Building it would have involved demolishing the historic Willard Hotel. In 1972, a special planning body — the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) — was created to guide the recovery effort. Although its area of influence was confined primarily to Pennsylvania Avenue, its plans for the adjacent area helped to knit the avenue back together with the old downtown.

PADC championed mixed-use development with a heavy sprinkling of the arts. During PADC's existence, the Federal Triangle complex was completed with the addition of the Ronald Reagan Building, the Canadian Embassy was built, art galleries were established in vacant Penn Quarter buildings, and the Navy Memorial and Market Square buildings were constructed. In 1996, as required by its original legislation, the PADC closed up shop. By then, much had been accomplished — Gallery Row was in place, and federal offices were moving to the area. But another spark was needed to bring the old downtown fully back to life.

That spark came with the construction of the MCI Center (now the Verizon Center), designed by **Ellerbe Becket;** Associate architects: **KCF-SHG Architects, Devrouax & Purnell Architects-Planners.** Its construction shifted sports and entertainment activity from Cap Center in the Maryland suburbs to the old downtown. The resulting influx of people encouraged restaurants and shops to locate there, with the result that 7th Street soon began to hum with activity. Advocates of downtown housing encouraged development of housing in the area in keeping with the ideas put forth PADC's 1977 plan. Doing that wasn't easy — land-use planning for years had encouraged the separation of housing from other uses. But neighborhood activists persisted, and the resulting mix of office, housing, and entertainment has boosted property values and transformed this part of the city into a safe and vibrant urban destination.

Today, Penn Quarter is abuzz with activity. Thousands of people now live in the area, many in new apartments and condos that were built without displacing existing area residents. The Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery (renovated by **Hartman-Cox Architects**) have recently reopened after several years of renovation, and new theatres are moving in, including the recently completed Wooly Mammoth Theatre (designed by **McInturff Architects**), and a second Shakespeare Theatre, larger than the first, that will be completed next year. While it has more theatres than most large cities, it lacks some neighborhood basics like a supermarket or hardware store (longtime resident Union Hardware closed up shop in 1999).

Penn Quarter may be a new name for an old part of the city, but its renaissance has added much to the livability of Washington. Intervention by housing activists and planning professionals helped ensure that this did not become another dead single-use district but an active 24-hour neighborhood.

AW *Come learn about the history and renaissance of this vibrant area in the AIA | DC's eighth annual Architecture Week Tour of Modern Architecture in Washington. In addition to learning more about the projects described above, you'll discover a restaurant built in an old postal loading dock, learn the location of James Bond's 1964 Aston Martin, admire the only DC building designed by Bauhaus superstar architect Mies van der Rohe, visit the only major DC building designed by an African American architect, and learn what's in store for the old convention center site. Reservations required.*

Saturday, September 9

Kids' Tour and Workshop on Capitol Hill

Learn about the styles, shapes, and materials that form buildings around us. Take a walking tour of Capitol Hill and finish up with snacks and a hands-on activity — designing and building your own rowhouse with supplied materials. Each participant will receive a booklet on the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Suitable for children ages 6 -12. 9:30 a.m. – noon. Friendship House, 619 D Street, SE. Free. Reservations required. Metro: Eastern Market. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

Sunday, September 10

Walking Tour of Penn Quarter

Come learn about the history and renaissance of this vibrant downtown neighborhood with the Chapter's executive director Mary Fitch. You'll discover a restaurant built in an old postal loading dock, learn the location of James Bond's 1964 Aston Martin, admire the only DC building designed by Bauhaus superstar architect Mies van der Rohe, visit the only major DC building designed by an African-American architect, and learn what's in store for the old convention center site. 2:00 p.m. Meet just outside the Archives/Navy Memorial Station. Free. Reservations required. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

All times and locations are subject to change. Check www.aiadc.com for updates

ARCHITECTURE WEEK 2006

Rosedale House and Grounds Tour

Learn how one neighborhood took charge when unwanted development threatened. Tour the newly renovated Rosedale farmhouse, said to be the oldest structure in the District of Columbia, and walk the historic grounds of the estate now preserved for public enjoyment. Also visit two of the new homes constructed as part of the real estate deal that made this innovative historic preservation and community project possible. 2:00-5:00 p.m. 3501 Newark Street, NW. Meet at the driveway marked "Rosedale Conservancy" near 36th Street. $30 ($45 on site). Reservations required. Metro: Cleveland Park. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

CANSTRUCTION Build-Out

Watch teams of architects, engineers, and contractors make giant structures from canned goods in a six-hour marathon building session. The CANSTRUCTIONS are on exhibit all week before being dismantled for donation to the Capital Area Food Bank. The public can vote for their favorites throughout the week by donating canned food "ballots." 6:00 p.m. – midnight. The Shops at 2000 Penn, 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Free. No reservations required. Metro: Foggy Bottom.

Monday, September 11

Remembering 9/11 with the Children at Leckie Elementary

Four years ago the Washington Architectural Foundation helped the children of Leckie build a garden memorial to the teacher, student, and two parents who were killed in the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. Come share in a special assembly at Leckie Elementary School. 9:00 a.m. 4201 Martin Luther King Avenue, SW corner of MLK and Chesapeake, SW. Free. Reservations required. Leckie is not located near a Metro Station. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

Tuesday, September 12

Office Tour

See some of the best looking offices in town—architects' offices. Five Dupont Circle architects open their doors to the public. This self-guided tour begins at Versaci Neumann & Partners at 1350 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 401. 5:00-7:00 p.m. Reservations required. Metro: Dupont Circle. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

Wednesday, September 13

Chapter Awards and Jurors' Roundtable

"And the winners are..." After a long day of deliberations, a jury of distinguished visiting architects announces their picks for the best new Washington architecture. Reception follows. 6:00 p.m. AIA|DC Chapter House, 1777 Church St., NW. Free. Reservations required. Metro: Dupont Circle. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

Thursday, September 14

Annual Meeting and Lecture

Come hear about the latest events of the Chapter and then be entertained by Martin Moeller, author of the about-to-be-published fourth of edition of the AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington DC. Hear some great stories and learn about the new buildings to be covered. 6:00 p.m. AIA|DC Chapter House, 1777 Church St., NW. Free. Reservations required. Metro: Dupont Circle. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

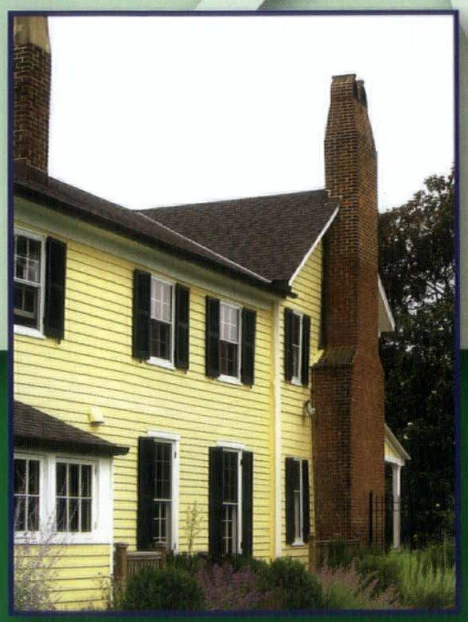
Saturday, September 16

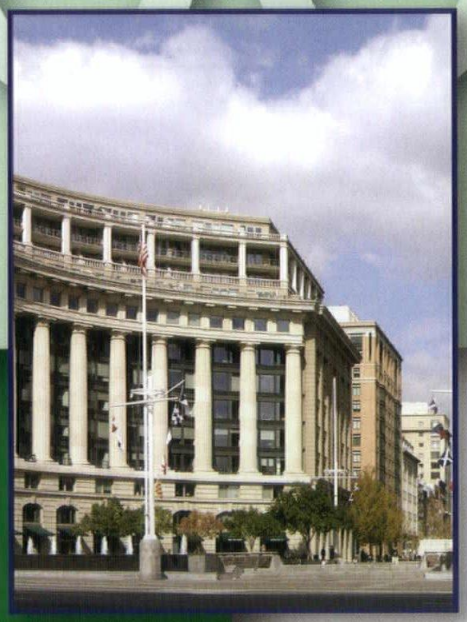
Tour of the Swiss Embassy Residence designed by Steven Holl, AIA

The Swiss Embassy is holding a special tour of the nearly completed residence with Project Manager Olaf Schmidt of Steven Holl's office just for *ARCHITECTURE**DC*** readers! 9:00 -10:00 a.m. For security purposes reservations are required. Space is limited. $20. Swiss Embassy complex, 2920 Cathedral Avenue, NW. Metro: Woodley Park/Zoo/Adams Morgan. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

CANSTRUCTION Awards

"Best Meal," "Structural Ingenuity," "People's Choice," and other awards are given to giant structures made from canned goods. Reception follows. Lend a hand in de-constructing the CANSTRUCTIONs for donation to the Capital Area Food Bank. 12:30 p.m. The Shops at 2000 Penn, 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Free. No reservations required. Metro: Foggy Bottom.





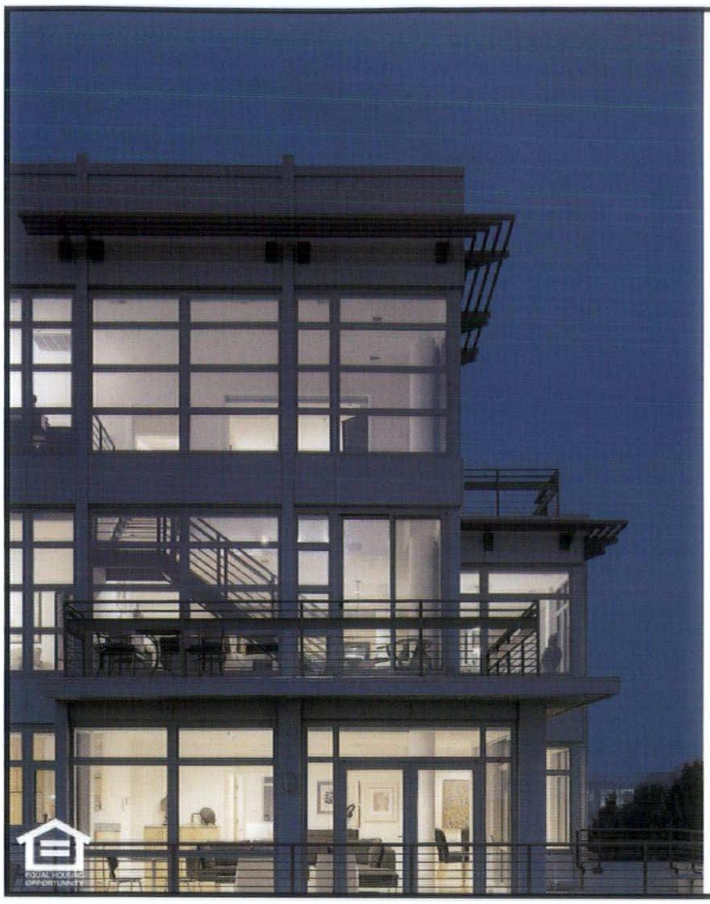
Friday, September 15

The Art of Architecture Auction

Earlier this year we sent letters to the world's greatest architects asking them to donate a sketch. Very soon our mailbox was brimming with original works of art. You can own a sketch by Moshe Safdie, FAIA; Steven Holl, AIA; Charles Gwathmey, FAIA; Robert Venturi, FAIA and many others by attending our auction, which benefits the Washington Architectural Foundation. Greater Washington Board of Trade CEO Jim Dinegar will be our auctioneer. 6:30 p.m. at the Galleria at Lafayette Centre, 1155 21st Street, NW Washington DC. Prepaid Tickets $50; on site tickets $60. Reservations required. Parking available. Metro: Foggy Bottom. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.

How to Work with an Architect.

Better clients make better houses. Learn the ins and outs of selecting an architect. Our session will cover the design and construction process and show you all the resources you need to find the architect that is right for you. 3:00 -5:00 p.m. AIA|DC Chapter House, 1777 Church Street, NW. Free. Reservations required. Metro: Dupont Circle. Visit www.aiadc.com to register.



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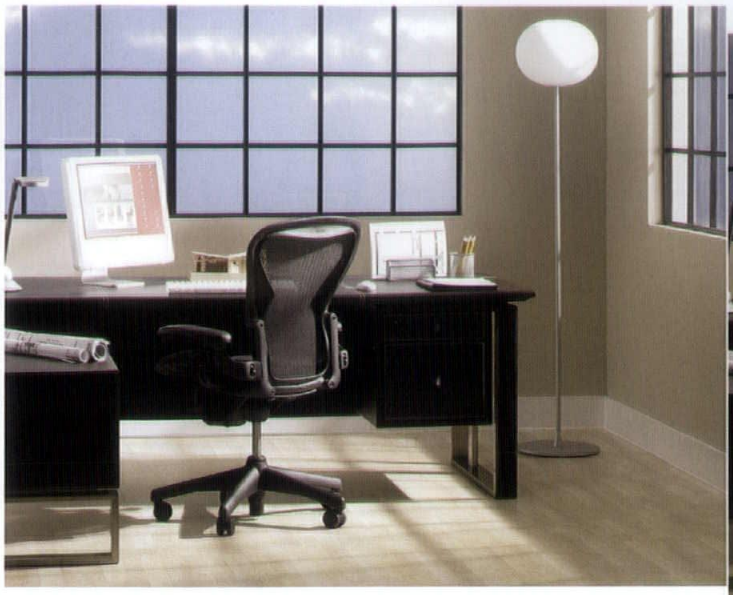

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Lighting design by Scott M. Watson, Inc. in a Georgetown apartment overlooking the Potomac.

Home$ense

Lighting: The Inside Story

by Denise Liebowitz

We analyze floor plans, dither about window treatments, and fuss over finishes. What often escapes homeowners' attention as they plan their new space is perhaps the most important piece of all: light. Illumination is the natural ally of architecture. Well designed lighting determines the visual and psychological impact of a space. It can enliven and animate, or it can soothe and calm. Light creates spatial impressions; sometimes flooding a room with its ephemeral airiness, other times suffusing it with a warm and cozy glow. So what do homeowners need to know about working with their architects and lighting designers to bring light into their lives that is beautiful, functional, and cost effective?

The first question is, if you have an architect do you need a lighting designer? That depends, according to the experts. For relatively small and straightforward residential jobs, most architects are comfortable planning the lighting themselves. When the project becomes large and complex, or when the client has very exacting requirements, however, many architects are happy to call in a lighting professional.

Todd Ray, AIA, of **Studio27 Architecture** says lighting designers are "often critical members of the design team, supplementing an architect's conception of space by providing the desired illumination effects." **Andrea Hartranft, LC,** with **CM Kling Associates** agrees. "If all you want are down lights in your kitchen, you probably don't need a lighting designer." On the other hand, she said, you may want some outside help if you have a complex lighting installation that includes security features, extensive control systems, or programming for variable room settings. "Lighting designers know what's available on the market, they know the fixtures, the lamps, the actual physics of light. Some architects know this stuff and some don't. The sign of a successful architect is when he knows it's time to consult with an expert."

Homeowners, architects, lighting designers, and interior designers collaborate in a variety of ways depending on size of the budget and complexity of the project. **Pat Stanley,** a lighting designer in the Design and Specifications Department of **Dominion Electric Supply** in Arlington, Virginia, works on large houses—big additions, new construction, large-scale renovations. She says that typically homeowners bring in their blueprints and she begins by asking them lots of questions. What's their budget? How old are they (older eyes need higher light levels than younger ones)? What kind of setting do they want—romantic, business-like? Do they have art to illuminate? And so on, down to questions about lighting needs in media rooms, wine cellars, and ironing centers.

Stanley says that the homeowners are sometimes accompanied by their architect, builder, or interior decorator, or sometimes by all of them, and sometimes by none. It doesn't matter; once Stanley has the answers to her questions, she begins by making the plan for recessed lighting, then moves on to a plan for the decorative lighting—the sconces, chandeliers, and such. She says at Dominion Electric a complete recessed lighting package for a 7,000- to 10,000-square-foot house can average about $30,000, with the decorative lighting package in addition to that.

Scott M. Watson, Inc

Ron Blunt Photography

A project by Studio27 Architecture employs translucent doors and an interior clerestory.

Over at **Illuminations, Inc.,** a contemporary lighting retailer with two locations in the District, **John Seward** says that their Certified Lighting Consultants work at an hourly rate with a three-hour minimum. There, after the client fills out a questionnaire on the project, the initial consultation includes a site visit to the home, usually followed by a client visit to the showroom. Seward reports that some homeowners bring their plans with them (by weekday appointment only, please). Others are accompanied by their architects or interior designers, and still others are sent in by their architects or designers with recommendations for specific fixtures they want their client to look at and approve.

Again, collaboration with the architect varies depending on the architect's comfort level with lighting and the needs of the project, said Seward. "Some [architects] will locate the architectural fixtures and select the product as well. They will leave the decorative fixtures for the final stages of the project and rely on us to guide the client to the fixture that will best suit their needs. Other times we are brought in at the early stages of the project. Once the electrician is brought on board there is always a rush to get fixture selection done so he can establish circuit loads etc. So in short, we are brought in at different times in the project depending on the role we are going to play."

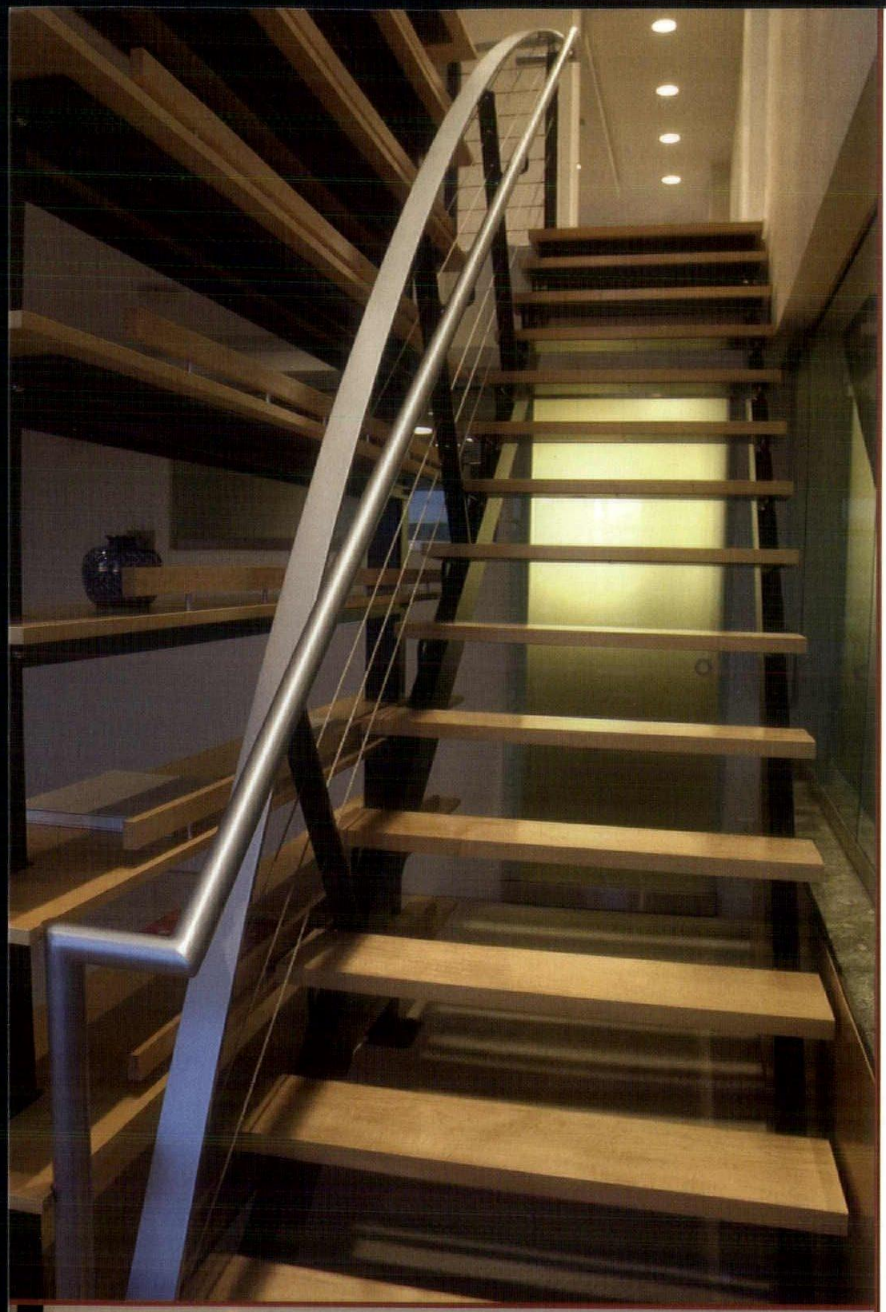
Scott Watson, IALD, LC, an independent lighting consultant located in Gaithersburg, Maryland, says he usually does a "dog and pony show" for the client at the homeowner's residence with the architect. "I show them the different effects of different lamps and fixtures; how the wall looks washed with light; how different equipment can give glaring or subdued results." Watson leaves selection of the decorative fixtures to the client's interior designer. In general, though, he finds interior designers don't design in enough light, it often falls to him to amplify the light and install complete dimming systems.

Ideally, Watson says the lighting designer should be on the job before anyone lays out any ducts or pipes that might interfere with where the lights need to go. The designer needs to be on site at the very last stages of the project as well, adjusting lights when furniture and art are finally in place.

While Watson is most often brought into a project by the architect, homeowners also go to him directly. "I get lots of repeat business from homeowners who worked initially with me and their architect. When they get new art or need to re-light they call me directly."

Asked to identify the hottest trends in home lighting, the experts all point to the use of smaller but highly efficient recessed fixtures. The old-style ceiling cans measuring five to eight inches in diameter are now being replaced with three-inch fixtures. Also, where architects and designers once routinely hung three lights over the kitchen island, they are now placing one sleek fluorescent pendant fixture. Increasingly, homeowners are requesting ceiling cove lighting, and, for those massive chandeliers in multi-storied entry foyers, they want electric lifts to ease cleaning and bulb replacement chores. And some clients are specifying windows pre-wired to accommodate Christmas lights.

Watson reports that in his projects he frequently creates



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Maxwell MacKenzie, Architectural Photographer

"lighting scenes": 10-12 lights grouped together and pre-set to achieve the desired lighting level. The scenes create the appropriate lighting environment for a specific activity with one touch to a switch or dimmer. Set them once and you never have to adjust them again. In the kitchen, for example, one "scene" might be task lit for food preparation and another for general ambient lighting of the area. With the increasing appearance of glass-fronted kitchen cabinets, homeowners are requesting lighting that makes them glow, and with the growing popularity of highly reflective granite counters clients want under-cabinet lights that don't create glare.

Although many professionals are promoting "green" lighting solutions that are easy on the environment, they are meeting some resistance from their clients. "We certainly have clients that want to use fluorescent and LED fixtures in their home, but they are the exception rather than the rule," said Illuminations designer Seward. "With the improvement of color rendition in fluorescent lamps as well as reduced size, there are some beautiful fixtures employing this technology…perfect for the kitchen."

When going solo without the assistance of a professional lighting consultant or a knowledgeable architect, homeowners can make costly mistakes. Todd Ray says homeowners need to know, for example, that all down lighting is not created equal. "You get what you pay for. Inexpensive down lights have weak springs and do not hold trim to the ceiling." Also he said homeowners should focus as much on adjustability as on fixture selection. "Make sure your fixtures are on a dimmer and can be aimed."

For Seward, homeowners (and builders) frequently choose inadequate lighting for kitchens and baths. "These two rooms need to be over lit because you need to be prepared for different lighting needs in those rooms. Have a lot of light but have it controlled separately so you have plenty when you need it…cooking in the kitchen and shaving in the bath…but be able to lower the light levels for party time and relaxing."

The right lighting can dramatically transform a room, it can bring subtle warmth into living spaces, and it can make good architecture even better. Putting the job into the hands of the professionals is often worth the additional expense. At its best, the collaboration between architect and lighting designer can produce extraordinary results. "It's best [for a lighting designer] to work with an architect who has a really clear vision of what they want," said Hartranft. "If they know what they want and can articulate it, a lighting designer can give it to them. Successful architects want lighting to complement their vision for their architecture. The lighting should go away and let the architecture shine. A good lighting designer knows how to do this."

Left top: Downlights and a backlit interior door illuminate a stairway. Left bottom: Natural and artificial lighting blend in a northeast-facing living room. Designs by Studio27 Architecture.

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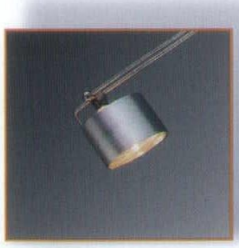

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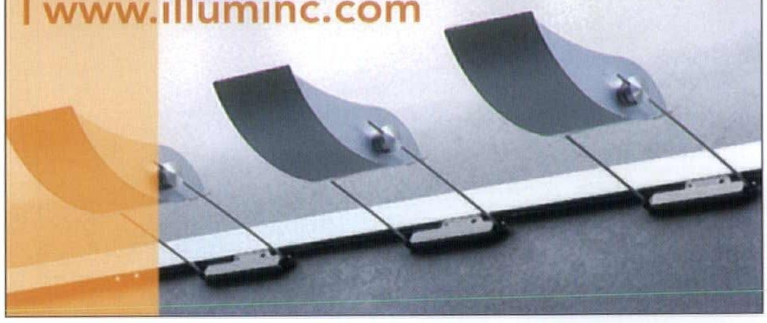

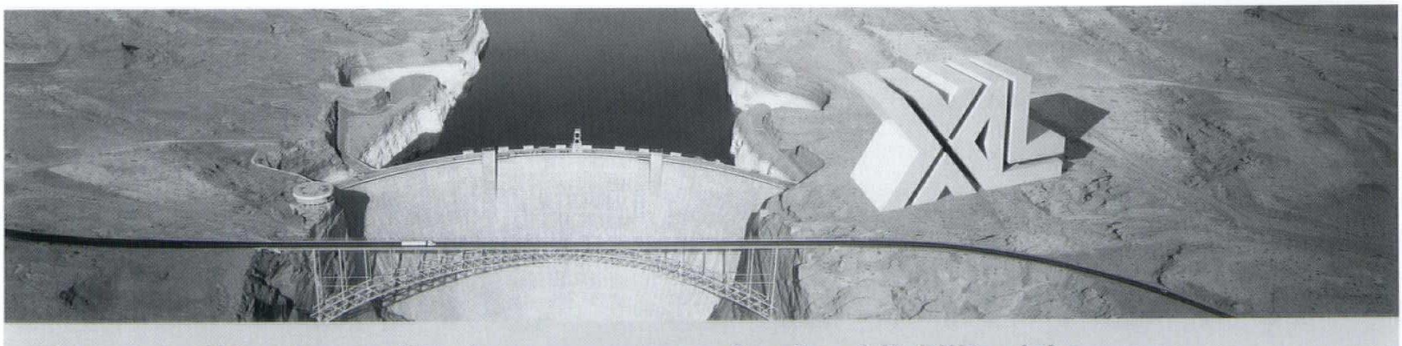

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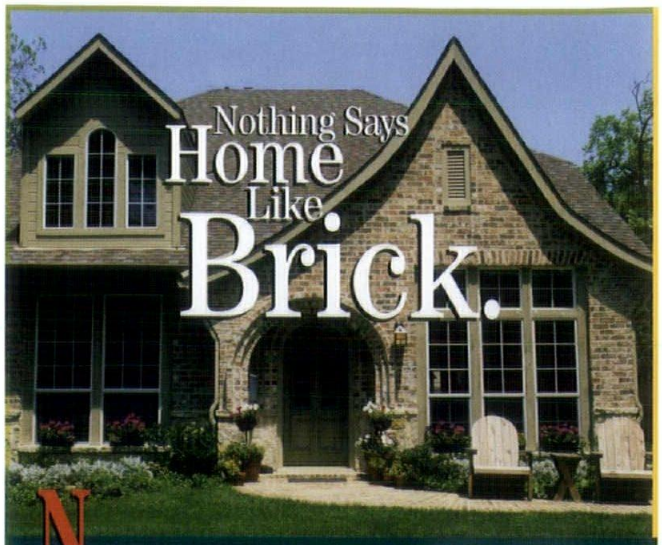

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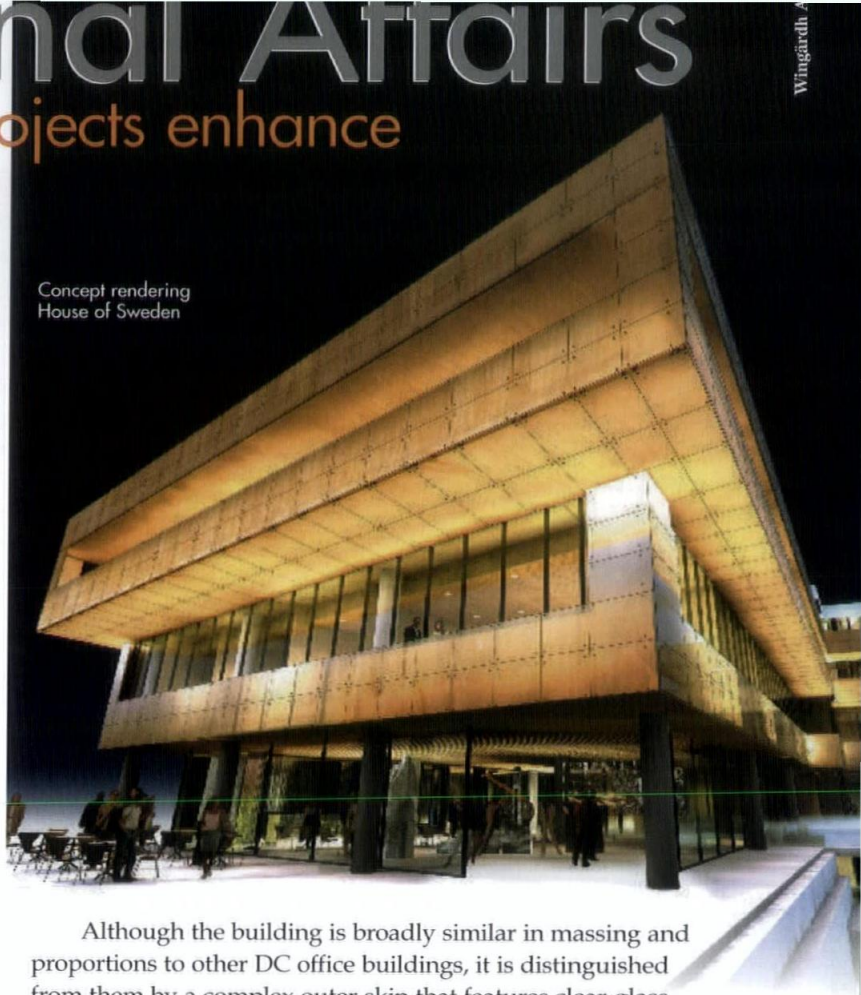
International Affairs

Three new embassy projects enhance DC's architectural fabric

by Ronald O'Rourke

Embassy buildings – including chanceries, consulates, and residences – have long been part of DC's architectural scene. In recent years, much of the city's embassy-related construction has taken place at the International Center – a reserve just above the University of the District of Columbia's Connecticut Avenue campus that has become a concentrated showcase of modern embassy design. But embassy-related construction continues elsewhere in DC as well. Here are three new projects that will enhance the architectural fabric of other parts of the city.



Wingårdh A

Concept rendering
House of Sweden

House of Sweden

The almost-finished House of Sweden building, located on the Georgetown waterfront at the foot of 30th Street NW, will be officially inaugurated in October. Those wanting an early look, however, can already view the building's mostly-completed exterior from various sides, and peek through the glass at some of the first-floor interior spaces now being finished.

The building, designed by Swedish architects **Tomas Hansen** and **Gert Wingårdh,** fronts onto the Potomac at a site close to where Rock Creek flows into the river. The site offers sweeping river views, but is otherwise a tightly hemmed-in property. It is edged on one side by Rock Creek, with the low-key Thompson Boat Center building nearby, and on the other side (across 30th Street) by the massive and exuberantly post-modern Washington Harbour building designed in the 1980s by **Arthur Cotton Moore, FAIA** (who is interviewed elsewhere in this issue). The remaining edge of the property, on the side opposite the river, faces a brand new office building, also designed by Moore, and just beyond, the steel and concrete of the Whitehurst Freeway.

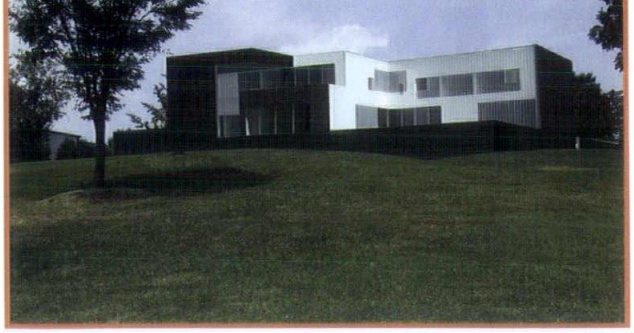
The architectural challenge was to design a multipurpose structure for this site that would house not just embassy offices, but also facilities for public events and corporate apartments that are to be rented out primarily to employees of companies with Swedish ties. The Swedes wanted a building characterized by openness and transparency – a notable goal at a time when many embassies are being built like fortresses, cut off from the cities in which they are located.

Hansen and Wingårdh's design, which was selected in a competition, is a modernist, five-floor building of about 69,000 square feet. The building, which in plan is a modified parallelogram, features public meeting rooms on the below-grade bottom level, an exhibit hall on the entry level, embassy offices on the floor above that, and two top floors with 16 corporate apartments ranging in size from about 600 square feet to almost 3,000 square feet.

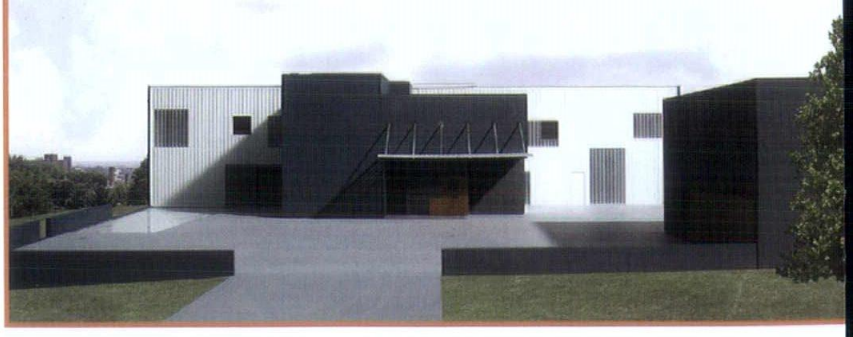
Although the building is broadly similar in massing and proportions to other DC office buildings, it is distinguished from them by a complex outer skin that features clear-glass panels mounted several inches away from the primary exterior walls, and upper floors clad in glossy panels that have been printed in a light-colored wood pattern. (Hansen and Wingårdh originally wanted these glossy panels to be made of real wood sandwiched in glass, but Moore cautioned that wood in such an arrangement would not hold up well in Washington's climate, and a weathering test of a prototype proved him right.) The wood-colored panels, which evoke the traditional reliance on wood in Swedish and other Scandinavian architecture, are backlit so they will glow softly at night, making this part of the building appear to float in the evening. Together, the clear-glass and wood-colored panels soften the exterior of the building while maintaining its modern design aesthetic.

At the base of the building, Hansen and Wingårdh employed a series of stone steps to gently integrate the property with the Potomac promenade, enhancing this public space. There is also an upgraded path along the creek side of the building.

On the inside, the building's sleekly modern public spaces feature glass, blond-colored wood, and stone flooring that is light in most places, with dark accent pieces. These spaces promise to rival those of the Finnish embassy on Massachusetts Avenue as spectacular examples of publicly accessible modern interior design.



Steven Ho



The heavy rainfalls in DC at the end of June caused some water damage to the building's bottom two levels. As a result, the inaugural display that was scheduled for the exhibit hall may be delayed beyond the building's October unveiling.

Swiss Ambassador's Residence

The new Swiss ambassador's residence, located at 2920 Cathedral Avenue in DC's Woodley Park neighborhood, is also nearing completion. The residence was designed by New York-based architect **Steven Holl, AIA,** and Swiss architect **Justin Rüssli,** who worked at Holl's firm from 1992 to 1996 before setting up his own firm in Switzerland. The 13,993-square-foot structure replaces an older residence, measuring 10,226 square feet, that was built in 1926 for Henry Wallace (the future Vice President), purchased by the Swiss in 1940, and expanded with an annex in 1960.

Holl and Rüssli were the winners of a 2001 competition to design the new residence. The competition drew initial entries from more than 50 international teams, from which 10 finalists were selected. Holl, one of America's most noted architects, has designed a number of major buildings in the United States and Europe, including the Kiasma contemporary art museum in Helsinki. The new Swiss ambassador's residence is his first major project in the DC area.

Holl and Rüssli's design is a modernist, almost abstract structure with a cruciform plan that might be viewed as a take on the Swiss flag, though Holl has said that this wasn't deliberate. The building's black and white facades – composed of charcoal-colored concrete trimmed in local slate and sand-blasted structural glass planks – are, however, intended by Holl to suggest the snow-covered rock of the Swiss Alps. Rooms to be used for official functions are oriented toward the Washington Monument, and a back terrace will offer impressive views of the city.

The building conforms to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles for sustainable construction. Among other things, it will feature a green roof planted in sedum that is intended to keep the house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter, reducing energy use.

Although the building is set back from the street and consequently is not as closely approachable as the House of Sweden, the Swiss embassy holds many public functions each year, so perhaps at some point you'll get your chance to see it up close.

Hungarian Embassy

The Hungarian government plans to break ground soon on a renovation and expansion of its Soviet-era embassy located at 3910 Shoemaker Street, NW, at the intersection of Shoemaker and Linnean Avenue. The site overlooks Rock Creek Park and is adjacent to historic Pierce Mill.

The project entails the complete renovation of the existing chancery building (36,000 square feet on two floors, plus a basement garage) and the construction of a new, three-story, consulate building of 9,000 square feet containing both offices and residences for staff and visitors. Construction is anticipated to begin in January 2007 and finish in May 2008.

The design architect for the project is **A&D Studio** of Hungary, which was selected in a 2004 competition held among Hungarian architects. The collaborating architect of record is **Geier Brown Renfrow Architects** of Alexandria, VA. At GBRA, **William Geier, AIA,** is the principal in charge for the project, **Dan Houston, AIA,** is the senior project manager, and **Joseph McCoy, AIA,** is the project architect. GBRA's staff architects for the project are **Eliza Beth Engle, AIA, Sonia Jarboe, Nianti Bird-Ortize,** and **Sukanya Shenolikar.**

The existing Hungarian chancery building is a 1970s "Brutalist"-style structure with exposed, cast-in-place concrete beams, pre-cast concrete infill panels, and somewhat tired and dark interior spaces. Hungary wants the renovated and expanded facility to generate a signature presence projecting the country's new self-image as a modern democracy and proud member of the European Union. An additional goal was to design a building whose massing, exterior materials, terraces, and landscaping would be respectful of the park and help the building blend into the landscape.

The renovation of the chancery building will replace the building's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, reconfigure interior walls, and replace all interior finishes. A portion of the building near the Linnean Street entrance will be rebuilt. The façade will be reclad

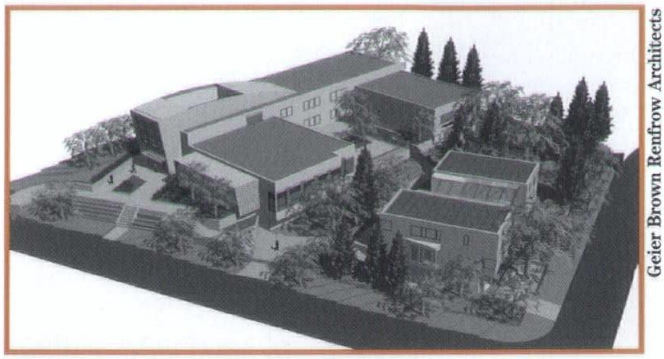
with a combination of pre-patinated copper cladding and large-format porcelain ceramic wall panels in two shades of warm grey. The ceramic wall panels will form part of a "pressure-equalized rain screen system" – an energy-efficient technology that was developed in Europe about 20 years ago, but which to date has been used in only a few U.S. buildings.

A new building element will be added to the chancery to form a ceremonial public entry and sculpturally screen rooftop mechanical equipment. The lower portion of the new entry will incorporate strips of a translucent concrete invented by a Hungarian architectural student. Between the two wings of the U-shaped building, an existing terrace overlooking the park will be reconfigured and updated with new materials and plantings to provide an attractive outdoor entertaining area.

The new consulate building will replace a small existing residence. The new building will consist of a partially buried ground level housing consulate offices, and two above-ground residential wings with copper cladding and green roofs. The residential wings will share a courtyard that will act as a green roof for the consulate offices below while allowing views through to the park from the assembly hall in the larger chancery building. In addition to assisting with storm water management, the green roofing systems will reduce the visual impact of the building when viewed toward the park from neighboring uphill properties.

The building's other green features include high-performance lighting, occupancy sensors in most rooms, point-of-use water heaters, and interior structural and finish materials with recycled or otherwise environmentally responsible content. Exterior light levels will be kept to a minimum to maintain the neighborhood's character and protect views from the park. A significant effort went into designing the project so as to preserve a large American elm tree.

Don't miss the special tour for ArchitectureDC readers of the Swiss Embassy Residence on Saturday, September 16 at 9:00 am. Space is limited so register early. See Architecture Week calendar (page 37) for details.



Geier Brown Renfrow Architects

Right Above: Aerial view of plans for the Hungarian Embassy showing renovated chancery building on left and new consulate/residential building on right.
Below: Concept design of new entrance to the renovated chancery.

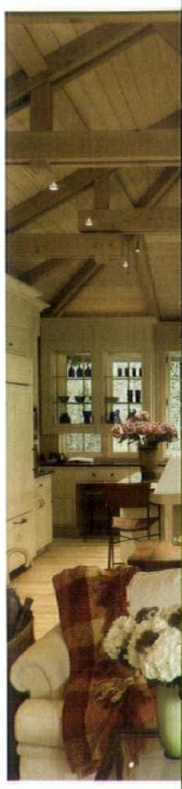
Geier Brown Renfrow Architects

Spotlight: 2006 Washingtonian Residential Design Awards

by Michael Tardif

The Washingtonian Residential Design Awards recognize excellence in residential architecture in the Washington area. The competition, jointly sponsored with Washingtonian Magazine, is open to all registered architects, and entries may include new construction, remodelings, and additions. National leaders in design and architecture serve as independent jurors for the event.

John Dean Photography



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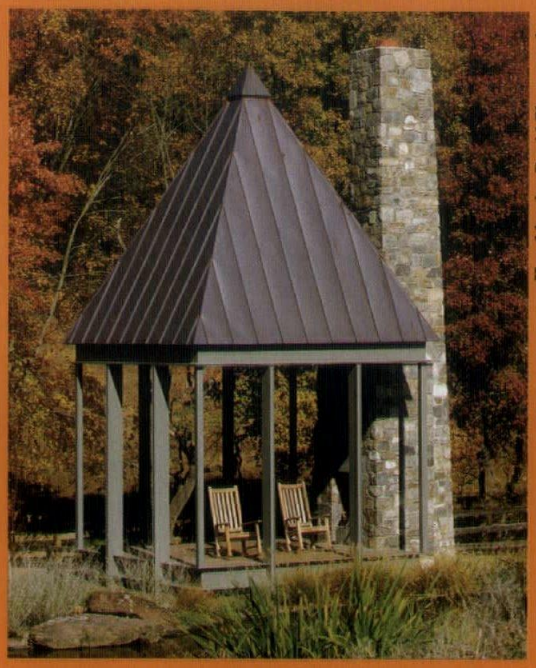
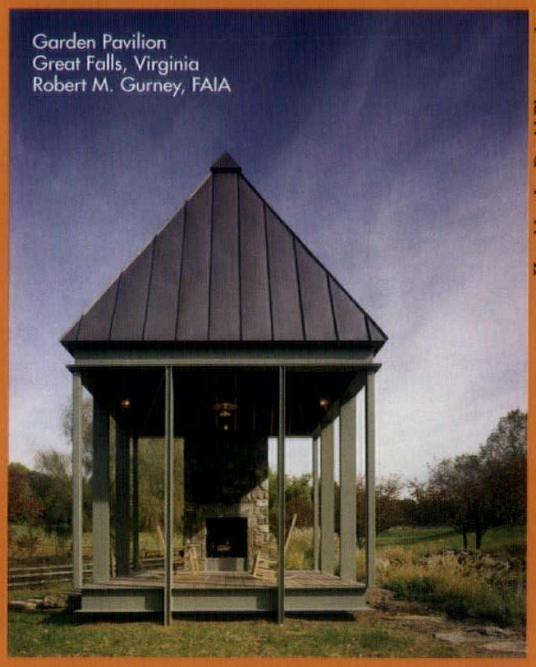


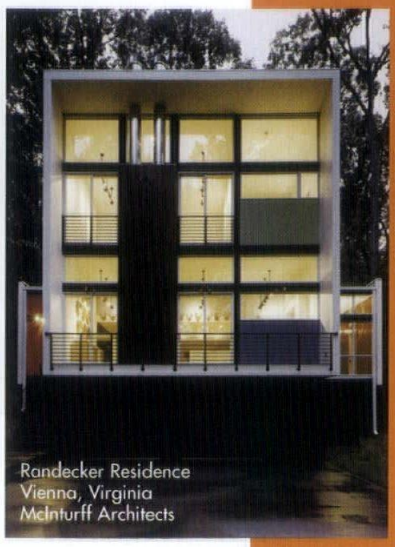
Hoachlander David Photography

John Dean Photography



Garden Pavilion
Great Falls, Virginia
Robert M. Gurney, FAIA

Hoachlander David Photography



Randecker Residence
Vienna, Virginia
McInturff Architects

Julia Heine/McInturff Architects

Julia Heine/McInturff Architects

Hoachlander David Photography

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Unit Derwin
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Studio27 Architecture

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Kessler Residence
Washington, DC
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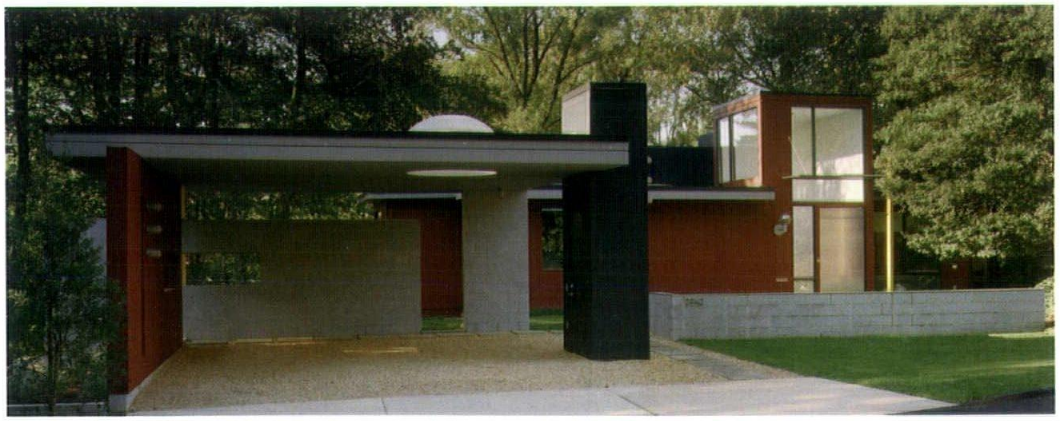
Prakash Patel Photography

Adams Row
Washington, DC
Hickok Cole Architects



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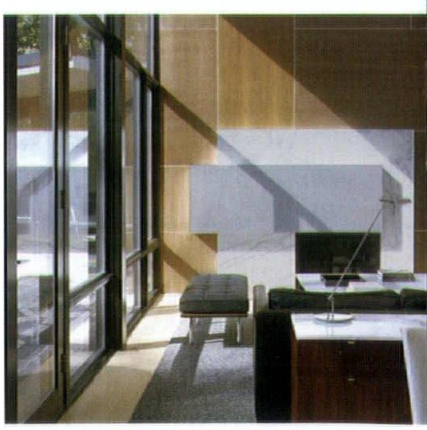
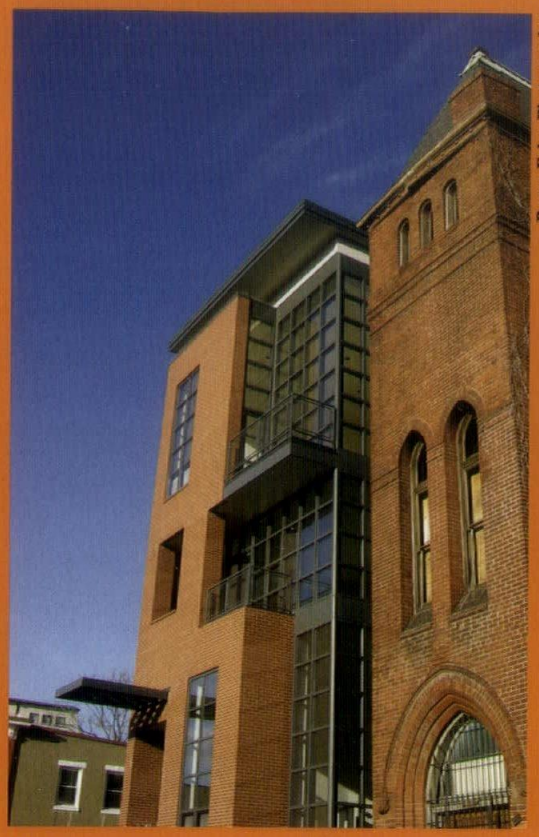


Prakash Patel Photography

Hoachlander David Photography

Renovation, Mid-century
Modern Residence
Washington, DC
Robert M. Gurney, FAIA



Roger Foley Photography

Visio
Washington, DC
Sorg and Associates, PC

Roger Foley Photography

Debi Fox Photography

Debi Fox Photography

W Street Residence
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DivisionOne Architects

Hoachlander David Photography

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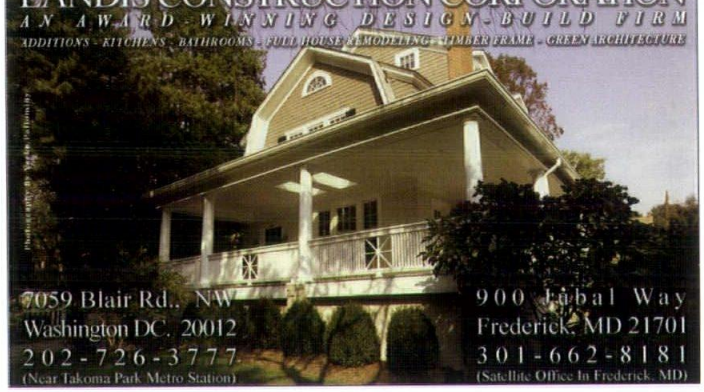

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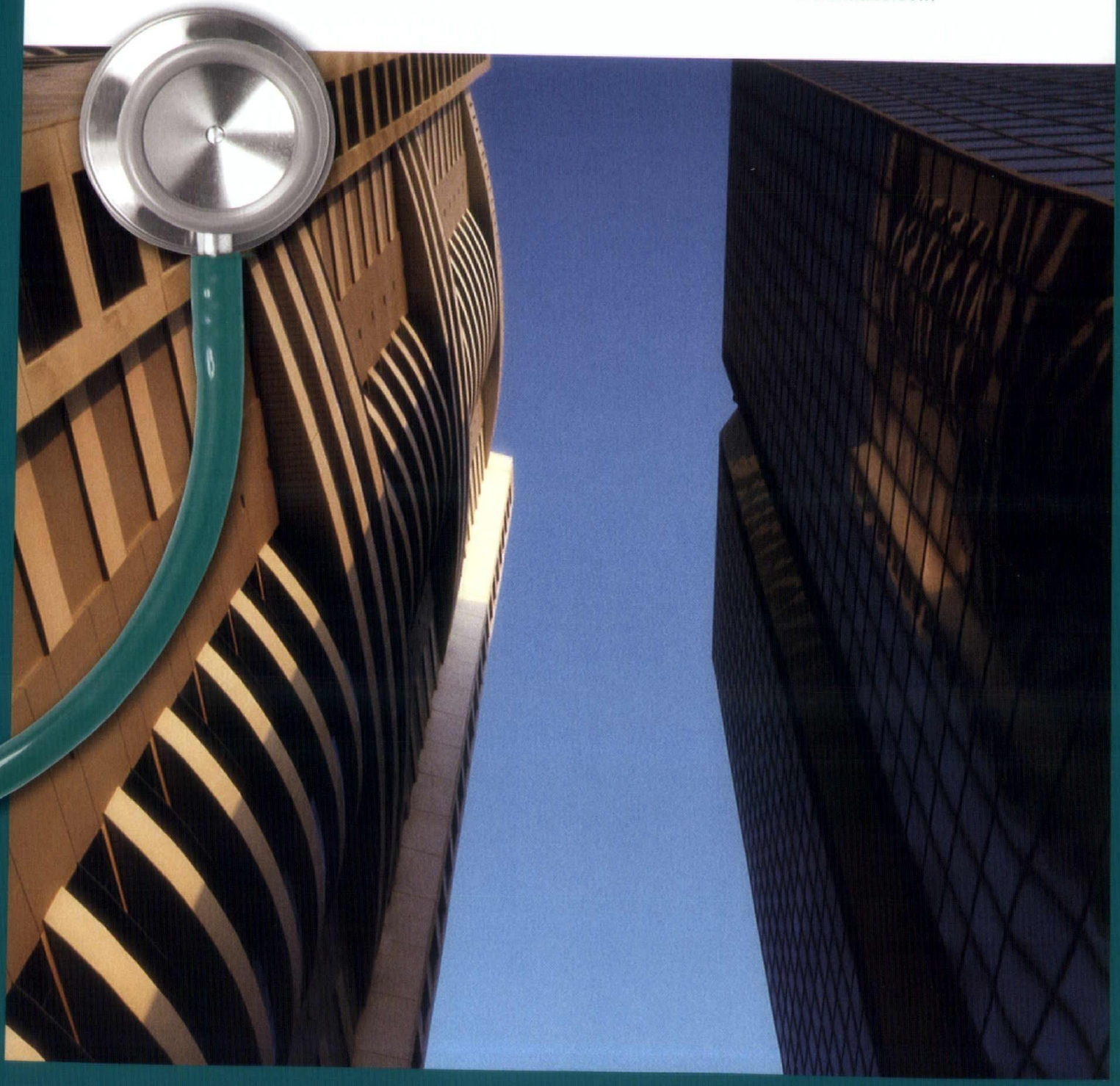

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